Police V. 7.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE POOR,

AND

Our uſual POLITY reſpecting the COMMON PEOPLE;

WITH

REASONS

Why they have not hitherto been attended with SUCCESS,

AND

Such ALTERATIONS offered to the Conſideration of the Legiſlature, as may probably introduce a more general Spirit of Induſtry and Order, and greatly leſſen the Publick Expence.

Quid leges ſine moribus
Vanæ proficiunt? -----

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M DCC LXVII.

AN

INQUIRY

INTO

The MANAGEMENT of the POOR, &c.

THE making a proper proviſion for the Poor, and the inforcing a more general ſpirit of induſtry and order among the common people of this country, are objects which have engaged the attention not only of many private perſons of great experience and abilities, but of the legiſlature alſo, for ſome ages paſt; and it is greatly to be lamented, that the many ſchemes hitherto made uſe of, with views ſo truly laudable and benevolent, and at ſuch immenſe expence to the nation, ſhould never yet, when they came to be carried into real practice, have, in any tolerable degree,

anſwered the expectations of the public; inſomuch, that many wiſe and judicious men have been led to think, that the inconveniencies of the community, as well as the wants and diſtreſſes of the Poor, have, upon the whole, been rather increaſed than leſſened, by every method that has hitherto been tried to remedy them.

I am perſuaded the want of ſucceſs has not been owing to any natural depravity peculiar to the low people of this country, more than in common with the reſt of mankind; and, if this be admitted, which, I preſume, no reaſonable man will diſpute, the cauſes of ſo great and intereſting a diſappointment, muſt be looked for ſolely in our laws and polity. How theſe defects and diſorders ariſe, and what remedies may be applied with any probability of ſucceſs, will be the ſubject of the following inquiry.

The legiſlature can never be employed upon an object which demands more ſerious and deliberate attention, and on which the ſtrength, the riches, and ſafety of this nation more immediately depend, than the framing laws to relieve the wants and ſufferings, and regulate the behaviour, of that great part of mankind, which in this, as well as in every other nation, the providence of God ſeems to have placed in a ſituation,

tion, where the happineſs and ſafety of themſelves, as well as the reſt of the inhabitants, who are in eaſier circumſtances, in a great meaſure depend on their early application to labour, their conſtant frugality and induſtry, accompanied with ſober, virtuous, and orderly behaviour.

If the preſent laws, ſupported at an expence, I apprehend, without example in any other nation in the world, were calculated to bring about this deſirable end, we ſhould not now be lamenting that the diſorders and ſufferings of the Poor are ſo far from being checked, or alleviated, that they ſeem rather to increaſe and multiply upon us, from year to year, in proportion as the expence increaſes; the principal part of which generally lying upon the induſtrious farmer and tradeſman, and who, ſeeing ſo great a part of it fall to the ſhare of the clamorous, undeſerving and idle, diſtribute it grudgingly; which is the foundation of a circumſtance moſt unhappily diſagreeable in ſo great an expence, that the giver has little or no pretenſions to benevolence or charity; and it is much to be feared that ſentiments of humility and thankfulneſs, are too often wanting in the mind of the receiver. Wherefore, it is greatly to be wiſhed that ſome method could be thought on which might make the raiſing the money for the ſupport of the Poor, in ſome greater degree,

the voluntary act of the perſons who ſupply it; by which means they would be neceſſarily led to conſider themſelves more accountable to their benefactors for their behaviour, when they found they were at liberty to regulate their relief, not only in proportion to the wants, but alſo the deſerts of the different objects which ſhould preſent themſelves.

Compulſive laws for the ſupport of the Poor, I apprehend, are peculiar to this country; notwithſtanding which, they have continued ſo many years the mode of relief with us, that I am perſuaded, no conſiderate perſon would recommend a total alteration at once; but yet ſomething might undoubtedly be done without the leaſt danger of any inconvenience ariſing from thence. Indeed, if the inhabitants of every pariſh, who are now rateable to the poor, were left intirely at liberty to give or withhold their proportion, the conſequence would certainly be, that the burthen muſt fall very unequally; for which reaſon, as things now ſtand, I would not propoſe altering the law, ſo far as it regards the equality of the rate, but principally as to the power and manner of diſtributing the money after it is raiſed.

The offices of church-warden, and overſeer of the Poor, eſpecially in all large and populous pariſhes

pariſhes in cities and great towns, are generally filled up with tradeſmen and mechanics, who are often very little intereſted in the expence, and whoſe ſituation makes it almoſt impoſſible for them not to do many things through favour and partiality. And not only a great part of the year is generally elapſed before they can well be, in any tolerable degree, acquainted with the nature of their duty; but, beſides, I apprehend, it is conſidered by moſt of them as an office liable to much cenſure, trouble, and loſs of time; and, therefore, their principal care is to rub through it with as little inconvenience to themſelves as they poſſibly can. For which reaſons, I preſume, it would be much more deſirable that the diſpoſal of the money, raiſed for the relief of the Poor, ſhould remain under the ſole authority of a pariſh-meeting, or veſtry. And in large pariſhes, that the care and trouble may be more divided, a certain number of the moſt conſiderable houſekeepers, together with the church-warden and overſeer, might be choſen annually, or as much oftener as ſhould be found neceſſary; and that every thing which regards the care and relief of the Poor, ſhould be left under their management and direction; ſubject, nevertheleſs, to the final controul and orders of a pariſh-meeting; which ſhould be ſummoned, from time to time, whenever any circumſtance aroſe which required their attention.

And this committee, choſen as above for the management of the Poor, I apprehend, ſhould meet once a week, or oftener, if neceſſary. And that proper objects of charity may never be at a loſs to know where to apply for relief, the church-wardens and overſeers might be impowered to adminiſter occaſional aſſiſtance, until the next meeting of the pariſh, or committee, from which time the whole care and management ſhould reſt with them. And, perhaps, if all the Inhabitants who hold under ten, twelve, or fifteen pounds a year in land; or eight, ten, or twelve pounds a year in houſes, according as the value of houſe-rent may happen to be in different parts of the country, were excuſed from ſerving pariſh-offices, and alſo from the trouble and loſs of time attending the care and management of the poor, it might be the means of preventing many inconveniencies; as it does not ſeem agreeable to reaſon and good policy, that perſons ſo little intereſted, and who, nevertheleſs, in ſome pariſhes, may make a conſiderable majority, and at the ſame time are, moſt probably, from their rank and education, to be ſuppoſed the leaſt qualified to form a right judgment, ſhould have it in their power to controul all the great land-holders, and principal inhabitants, upon whom the burthen almoſt wholly lies, and to direct an affair of

of ſuch great conſequence to the public, as well as the parties more immediately concerned.

I am perſuaded, if the determination of a pariſh meeting was generally final, and all appeals to juſtices of peace diſcouraged as much as poſſible, the conſequence would be moſt ſalutary not only to the public, but alſo to the Poor themſelves, in the long run. In regard to the public, the Poor would certainly be put more upon their good behaviour; and would be naturally led into ſentiments of greater humility, reſpect, and thankfulneſs, when they found that the ſupplying their wants, and alleviating their ſufferings, aroſe in great meaſure from voluntary kindneſs, and not altogether from the compulſion of laws. In regard to the Poor themſelves, when they were made ſenſible that their relief in time of diſtreſs, was left more at the diſcretion and benevolence of the pariſh, than under the former compulſive laws; they would of courſe become more circumſpect and provident in their general conduct, and in a manner compelled to make ſome proviſion againſt the day of want: and ſo by degrees, be moſt probably led into habits of ſobriety, frugality, and induſtry, which they would moſt certainly find to be a ſituation infinitely more deſirable and happy, than their former life of a ſcanty, dependent, and precarious ſupport.

I am aware, that the taking the proviſion for the Poor, ſo much out of the hands of the gentlemen in the commiſſion of the peace, may probably meet with oppoſition: but although I foreſee that many may differ from me in that point, nevertheleſs, I am thoroughly perſuaded the evil cannot be ſufficiently redreſſed, except the interfering of that power ſhall be in the whole, or in great part ſuperſeded. The inhabitants of every pariſh, muſt be the beſt, and indeed almoſt the only judges, both of the behaviour, the wants, and deſerts of their own Poor: and I apprehend, the greateſt part of appeals to juſtices of peace, is from the clamorous, undeſerving, and idle; who generally flatter themſelves, that either by tiring them with their importunities, or by working upon their paſſions by artful repreſentations of diſtreſs, they ſhall at laſt be able to prevail: and as thoſe magiſtrates, like other men, are not exempt from the common infirmities of human nature; the popularity of the action, co-operating with the natural tenderneſs and compaſſion, even of the beſt, and moſt cautious men, may ſometimes very undeſignedly miſlead their judgment; and by that means many undeſerving perſons encouraged to continue in idleneſs, who without this reſource would be under the neceſſity of providing for themſelves by ſome honeſt labour.

But if this ſhould be conſidered, as taking too much out of the hands of thoſe magiſtrates, and that the Poor might poſſibly thereby be expoſed ſometimes to unjuſtifiable hardſhips; at leaſt the appointment of one juſtice of peace only, ſhould never be binding upon any pariſh, until it ſhall be confirmed by the quarter or petty ſeſſions, or by ſome other juſtice in the neighbourhood, to be named by the pariſh that ſhall think itſelf aggrieved; in order that an affair of ſuch conſequence to the public, as well as the perſons immediately intereſted, may not altogether depend on the prejudice, the eaſineſs, the caprice, or perhaps, ſometimes, the reſentment of one man.

There is no great reaſon to apprehend, that the majority of the inhabitants of any pariſh, whatever may be ſuppoſed of particular perſons, would ever ſuffer any objects labouring under real diſtreſs, although they ſhould be ever ſo undeſerving, to continue in want and miſery, without adminiſtering relief; much leſs to ſink under the preſſure of their misfortunes. Unfeigned diſtreſs operates ſo ſtrongly upon the feelings of mankind in general, that they are not apt, at thoſe times eſpecially, to make any ſtrict ſcrutiny into the cauſes that might have produced it. The natural ſentiments of tenderneſs and humanity, imper-

imperceptibly compel men to employ all their attention, upon finding out preſent means of relieving the unhappy ſufferer. Few indeed would be the occaſions of mens exerciſing their charity, ſhould they confine it to thoſe only, who labour under misfortunes they could not poſſibly have prevented.

The natural genius of the Engliſh nation, is moſt ſtrongly againſt the ſuppoſition of every tendency to cruelty, and want of compaſſion; and in fact, the great number of public and private charities, eſtabliſhed of late years, and ſupported at this time, by voluntary ſubſcriptions, notwithſtanding the heavy burthen of the poor rate; to which may be added the large contributions raiſed upon the public by common beggars, together with ſuch ſums as are diſtributed continually to neceſſitous families, by charitable perſons, many of which are done in ſecret; are unanſwerable arguments, that at preſent the torrent runs quite the contrary way. And if the legiſlature ſhould think proper to ſuperſede, or reſtrain the appeals to juſtices of peace; a further ſecurity might be provided againſt the want of compaſſion in pariſhes, for the ſufferings of the helpleſs poor, by ſubjecting them to the heavieſt penalties, if any inſtances, properly atteſted, ſhould be produced of their leaving any diſtreſſed

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objects to ſink under the weight of their miſeries, by with-holding their aſſiſtance, when it ſhall appear that the caſe had been made known to them, and application made for relief; nay although the event ſhould not prove fatal to the unhappy ſufferer, any unjuſtifiable, or cruel diſregard of the diſtreſſes of the helpleſs poor, ſhould be liable to a proportionable degree of cenſure and penalty. But I flatter myſelf, this part of the law would ſeldom want to be carried into execution.

The fundamental error reſpecting the lower claſs of people, lies principally here; that the general tendency of our laws and polity, is rather aimed at the ſupplying their neceſſities, and puniſhing their diſorders and offences, after they have happened, than in removing and preventing the cauſes of them; and until ſome effectual alteration ſhall be made in this reſpect, the legiſlature may go on adopting plan after plan; may give juſtices of peace ſtill more unlimited powers for enlarging pariſh allowances; may enable pariſhes to erect work-houſes of their own, for their reception and employment, or for that purpoſe may form the whole nation into larger diſtricts: the magiſtrate may go on to fine, impriſon, and torture with corporal puniſhment unhappy offenders; may ſend whole fleets of them into baniſhment and ſlavery, in our foreign colonies; may

may put a final period to their violence and outrage, by the moſt ignominious death: and to compleat the horrid ſcene, may expoſe their carcaſes on gibbets, as a warning and terror to others, until he is weary of the drudgery, it will all amount to nothing. Men that have been ſuffered to go on from their childhood in idleneſs and vice, if they are not reſtrained by the laws, will continue to be idle and vicious. Hunger, and thirſt, and cold, will compel them to look out for any means, be they ever ſo dangerous, of removing thoſe inconveniencies; the importunate and clamorous calls of nature will be heard and obeyed; they will admit of no denial or delay; the workhouſes and jails will never want inhabitants; the public expence, and public terror, will go on increaſing.

If this be the true ſtate of the caſe, ſurely if any regard for the happineſs and ſafety of mankind, if any compaſſion for the miſeries of our fellow creatures, is left among men, it is high time to look out for a remedy, that in ſome meaſure may be adequate to ſo dangerous and univerſal a diſorder.

In every country, the firſt magiſtrate is to be conſidered, as the political father of all his people; as well of thoſe who neglect and violate his laws,

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as of thoſe who regard and obey them; the refractory and diſobedient, are ſtill refractory and diſobedient children; nor are they at all the leſs on that account the objects of his care and tenderneſs; more eſpecially, if a total neglect of their morals and conduct, has naturally led them into that unhappy ſituation; and, to complete the public miſmanagement, every temptation beſides been thrown in their way, that might ſeduce them into diſobedience and ruin.

This fundamental error does not only prevail in the public laws and polity of this country, but even in private charities the ſame error too generally prevails.

In the metropolis of this kingdom, I have heard, there are five or ſix thouſand of the children of the very loweſt of the people, clothed and educated at the expence of private perſons; the males, I apprehend, are generally inſtructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic; the females, in reading, knitting, and needle-work; and, I preſume, both of them may be continued in theſe places of education, until they arrive at the age of fourteen. The males, during the whole time of their reception, are, I fear, too ſeldom engaged about any thing that has ſo much as the appearance of labour. The females, indeed, I believe,

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are generally kept, as was obſerved above, ſome conſiderable part of their time, to knitting, or needle-work. But if ſome meaner, and more laborious imployment, eſpecially when they are a little grown up, could be found for them, and take place of, or at leaſt be joined along with the other, it would undoubtedly be much more ſuitable to the lowneſs of their birth and ſtation, and have a natural tendency to fit them for thoſe ſervile occupations, which in the ordinary courſe of providence are moſt likely to fall to their ſhare. And in order thereto, until ſome ſuch proper labour ſhall be procured for them, the abſence from ſchool, both of the males and females, ſhould always be diſpenſed with, whenever any one of the truſtees, or the maſter or miſtreſs, ſhall be ſatisfied that the aſſiſtance of their labour is wanted at home, by their parents or friends, either for themſelves, or any other perſons. And indeed, it is a duty incumbent upon the truſtees, previous to their admitting ſuch children, to preſs it upon their friends in the ſtrongeſt manner, to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to find out ſome uſeful labour or other, to employ them about, and to give them to underſtand, that although they ſhould be able to ſpare them only an hour or two in a day, they will be admitted to the inſtruction of the ſchool; always taking the ſtricteſt care, that the children do not impoſe upon them by falſe pretences; and

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by theſe means, there might be ſome probability of their becoming uſeful ſubjects. There are many induſtrious families, much above the rank of the poor people, the inſtruction and employment of whoſe children we have now under conſideration, who think their own ſufficiently educated if they ſpare them an hour or two in an evening for that purpoſe, after the various employments and labours of the day are over. Theſe poor children are certainly taken out of that rank and order wherein providence had placed them, and muſt generally be left either deſtitute of all employment and proviſion, or take the place of many of the children of more induſtrious, reputable, and deſerving parents; and ſometimes, perhaps, of thoſe very perſons who had contributed to the expence of their education. What muſt be the conſequence ſhould this miſtaken charity prevail univerſally? Who will be left to do the labour and drudgery of the world? I am afraid, if we form our judgment from obſervation and experience, we muſt not expect that the habit and love of labour will be eaſily acquired by thoſe who do not begin to ſet about it until the age of fourteen. Young perſons ſo educated, will generally have other and higher views: but how are thoſe expectations to be ſatisfied? It is impoſſible they ſhould; there is not room left for them. Such numbers thrown into the world unaccuſ-

accuſtomed to labour, and deſtitute of other means of ſupport, cannot but raiſe very alarming apprehenſions both for the unhappy objects themſelves, and the public.

Whenever either the legiſlature, or private perſons, employ their care about the children of the Poor, the principal part of their plan ſhould be to enure them to the loweſt and moſt early labour; it will always remain the ground and foundation of every other virtue; the good effects of it will accompany them through every ſtation and period of life. All other teaching, which is not accompanied with labour, will be utterly unprofitable both to themſelves and the public. The love and practice of labour, make the principal part of the true religion of the great bulk of mankind. But the general rules here recommended, are by no means intended to take place whenever perſons of fortune and ability ſhall diſcover any ſtriking appearances of parts and genius in the children, even of the very loweſt of the people.

There are many other charitable foundations in the metropolis, originally planned and ſupported at this time by private perſons; which, in ſo extenſive and populous a city, if kept within due bounds and regulations, are both laudable and uſeful. But, ſurely, theſe things may be carried

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too far. Should the ſame humour prevail the next generation, as has the laſt, ſhould we not have reaſon to be afraid of the conſequences? If we once come to take out of the hands of the common people, the care and expence of educating and ſupporting their children, and make the proviſion for both of them too general and extenſive, under every circumſtance of misfortune and infirmity, from whatever cauſes they ſhall ariſe, whether from events which they could neither foreſee nor provide againſt, or from idleneſs, extravagance and vice, ſhall we not be in danger of greatly weakening, or perhaps almoſt utterly effacing thoſe great motives to frugality and induſtry, originally planted by providence, for the wiſeſt purpoſes, in the minds of all men, *viz.* The deſire of procuring for ourſelves a comfortable and independent ſupport in ſickneſs and in health, and the love and care of our offspring? Should we not be more uſefully employed if we endeavoured to find out ſome means or other of invigorating, and calling out into real practice, thoſe great and noble principles, and motives to action, which, in the minds of too many, are already become languid, and almoſt effaced?

There was a time within the memory of many perſons now living, when the common people in general had too much ſpirit and ſenſe of ſhame,

to accept charity either from pariſhes or hoſpitals, but thought it much more eligible to ſtruggle hard to make ſome proviſion by their frugality and induſtry, againſt the common accidents of ſickneſs, dearneſs of neceſſaries, and want of employment. At preſent their numbers keep them in countenance, and they crowd the doors of the church-wardens and overſeers, and fill the workhouſes and hoſpitals, without the leaſt ſcruple or remorſe; inſomuch, that if an exact account could be procured of all ſuch as are annually ſupported or relieved by public or private charities within the bills of mortality, and a compariſon made with what our ſituation was in that reſpect about half a century ago; at which time, if we form our judgment from the yearly bills of mortality, I apprehend, the city was nearly as populous as at preſent; I am perſuaded it would both aſtoniſh and alarm the moſt ſupine and inconſiderate. By this means not only a general careleſsneſs, and want of attention to their own well-being and ſupport, and, inſtead thereof, a total reliance upon the public for every thing in all caſes of diſtreſs, muſt neceſſarily be introduced; but alſo an univerſal meanneſs, and degeneracy from our true ancient ſpirit, muſt, in time, prevail among the common people of this country.

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Another ſnare and temptation to idleneſs, expence and vice, laid for the common people, is the great and uſeleſs number of public-houſes which we almoſt every where meet with; moſt of which, not being wanted for real convenience and accommodation, are perverted to the worſt and moſt dangerous abuſes; are often made the receptacles of proſtitutes, pilferers and thieves, and all other tranſgreſſors of the laws; or at leaſt the ſeducers of the thoughtleſs people into idleneſs, gaming, tippling, and the ſquandering away thoſe ſmall earnings, which are wanted at home for the ſupport of their ſtarving families, and too often into mortgaging their future labour to gratify the preſent humour of riot and exceſs: nor is there, in the long catalogue of errors in the laws and polity of this country, ſo fruitful a ſource of evil, nor which calls more loudly upon all thoſe who have it in their power to put a ſtop to ſo univerſal and dangerous a contagion. The conſideration of the revenue will never, ſurely, be urged as a motive for continuing ſo deſtructive an abuſe; even ſuppoſing any perſons could form ſo wrong and partial a judgment of things, as to imagine the revenue can ever ſuffer, upon the whole, by changing the intemperance, extravagance, and idleneſs of the common people, into ſobriety, frugality and induſtry; upon which alone the riches and ſtrength of the nation de-

pend. Nor can there, indeed, be adopted, by ſtateſmen, a more weak and dangerous error, than to ſuppoſe, that doing right, can ever poſſibly be attended with bad conſequences. If Truth and Right are not thoſe infallible guides which we may always ſafely follow, both in ſpeculation and practice, to what muſt we have recourſe? And, contrary to this plain and unerring rule, if the licencing ſuch uſeleſs numbers of houſes by public authority, as can have no poſſible means of ſupport but by corrupting the morals of the common people, and introducing every kind of vice and diſorder, is not eſtabliſhing iniquity by law, I am at a loſs to know what can be called ſo.

Whenever we ſhall be diſpoſed, in earneſt, to put a ſtop to this dangerous evil, the preſent method of licencing muſt be entirely altered. As the inhabitants of every pariſh muſt be the beſt, and generally the only judges of what accommodations of this ſort are wanting, no licence ſhould ever be granted for any perſon to keep a public-houſe, until it has been previouſly reſolved by a pariſh-meeting, after public notice given in the church, at leaſt ſix days, for that purpoſe, that ſuch a houſe is wanted in that place for the accommodation of the public, and that the perſon mentioned in the reſolution is a fit perſon.

If

If this method was ſteadily purſued, theſe houſes would hardly ever exceed the number that was really wanted, nor fall into improper hands; the perſons who kept them would always be enabled to procure for themſelves a ſufficient and reputable livelihood, without being under the temptation of uſing thoſe hurtful and dangerous methods of ſupporting themſelves, which are too frequently practiſed under the preſent management. Beſides, it is worthy the attention of the legiſlature to have ſome regard to the great number of hands that are rendered uſeleſs to the community by this unneceſſary increaſe of public-houſes. For, beſides the man and his wife, when they are kept by married perſons, they generally employ, at leaſt, one ſervant; nor is the converſation and examples, to be met with in thoſe houſes, at all calculated to prepare their children to make induſtrious and uſeful ſubjects.

Numberleſs other temptations to idleneſs and expence, are thrown in the way of the thoughtleſs people, either by the permiſſion or connivance of the civil magiſtrate. How ſcandalous is it to ſee the whole country laid under ſuch heavy contribution by thoſe itinerant impoſtors, who, under pretence of adminiſtering relief in all the various diſorders that afflict mankind, are permitted to erect public ſtages, where, by their low

humour, buffoonery, and other various amuſements, adapted to the taſte of the common people, and, by the addition of a few trinkets of ſmall value, by way of lottery, to put off their pills and plaiſters, in open violation of the laws, the ignorant multitude are drawn together, and cheated both of their money, time, and health, and frequently led alſo into other expences. Nor do theſe infamous frauds conſiſt in trifling ſums; it is not, I apprehend, very unuſual to ſee from twenty to thirty pounds, and, perhaps, ſometimes more, in one market-day, picked out of the pockets of the very loweſt of the people, by theſe Charlatans. It would be endleſs to enumerate the various cheats and impoſtors that are ſuffered to delude the credulous people.

I muſt not omit to take notice, in this place, of another great encouragement to idleneſs and vice; I mean the general permiſſion given to common beggars to impoſe, by their various arts, upon the benevolence and humanity of the people. The money levied upon the public by the different ſects of Mendicants, is much more conſiderable, I apprehend, than men generally imagine. We are told they have formed themſelves into a regular conſtitution, with their laws, their magiſtrates, their provincial and general aſſemblies, where their peculiar intereſts and concerns are de-

bated and ſettled. Whether their political inſtitutions, and internal government, may be carried to ſuch lengths and degrees of perfection as ſome men have imagined, I know not; but that the ſuffering ſuch groſs impoſitions, and dangerous abuſes, to be carried on without any notice being taken by the public, or any reſtraint from the civil magiſtrate, is contrary to ſound policy, and muſt be the occaſion of great licentiouſneſs, diſorder, and unneceſſary expence, can admit of no doubt: and that, whenever any effectual remedy ſhall be found out, and ſteadily applied, it muſt become a very great and intereſting acquiſition to the national ſtrength; as the public detriment ariſing from this abuſe is two-fold, both in the contributions theſe vagabonds raiſe upon the induſtrious common people, for it is from that quarter their encouragement principally ariſes, and in the loſs of their labour. And, indeed, ſo long as the Poor ſhall be ſuffered to procure for themſelves ſubſiſtence by theſe illegal and dangerous methods, all attempts towards enforcing a more general ſpirit of order and induſtry among the idle part of the common people, will ever prove vain and unſucceſsful. Some effectual check, it is hoped, will be given to ſuch hurtful and dangerous miſapplication of the public benevolence, by enlarging the rewards to all ſuch perſons as ſhall apprehend and deliver them into the cuſtody of

a peace-officer, to be conveyed by him before the civil magiſtrate; by enforcing ſuch penalties upon all pariſhes where theſe ſtrolling mendicants ſhall be relieved, and ſuch puniſhments upon the offenders, as ſhall ſeem proper to the wiſdom of parliament.

But the moſt daring offence againſt public order and decency, and which demands immediate redreſs, is the ſcandalous permiſſion of common proſtitutes to infeſt the ſtreets of the metropolis; a reproach upon civil government and good manners without example, I apprehend, in any other part of the world. The ſecret haunts and dark retreats of lewdneſs and debauchery, perhaps, may not ſo eaſily be ferretted out; but where the offence is committed before the face of the whole world, the ſuffering ſuch infamous abuſes to go unpuniſhed, can admit of no excuſe. Moſt dangerous and deplorable, indeed, is the ſituation of the poor inconſiderate people! as ſoon as the public houſe has turned them out, heated and prepared for any thing that may offer, the proſtitute ſtands ready in the ſtreet to lay hold of them, and ſeize what the publican had left, and then ſend them home to mourn at leiſure over their empty pockets and ruined health. The magiſtrate himſelf is not in a ſituation much to be envied, who is obliged to put the laws in execu-

tion, and puniſh unhappy thoughtleſs men; who through a total want of public care, and by ſuffering every poſſible temptation to be thrown in their way, have been almoſt unavoidably ſeduced from their duty, and drawn into ruin.

Another public error become now almoſt univerſal, is the introduction of foreign teas, inſtead of the wholeſome produce of our own country. It is ſurely the moſt unexampled and unnatural policy to ſuffer the whole body of the common people, eſpecially females of every age, to make at leaſt one meal a day upon a pernicious drug, which grows in the remoteſt parts of Aſia, and traverſes two thirds of the globe before it reaches this country: a drug which inſtead of adminiſtering nouriſhment and ſtrength, generally leaves thoſe that make uſe of it weakened and diſpirited, and by that means naturally introduces the love and habit of ſtrong liquors, as a preſent relief. Beſides the price of the tea and ſugar, which would go a good way towards the ſupport of a poor family, and without reckoning the loſs of time uſual upon theſe goſſiping occaſions; there is another great additional expence of fewel upon this account alone; the butter alſo which accompanies this abſurd meal is generally too expenſive a food for the common uſe of the Poor; aud ſuch is the infatuation of theſe unhappy people,

people, that they will rather ſuffer themſelves and their children to be reduced to the greateſt extremities of diſtreſs, by the want of common neceſſaries, than give up this favourite beverage. All men ſee and lament the evil, but no one hardly ſo much as thinks of a remedy. What objection could be made, if all perſons who have no other way of ſupporting themſelves and families, except by their frugality and induſtry, were ſubjected to a penalty of forty ſhillings, upon proof that any tea had been found or uſed in their houſes, without a licence, for which each family ſhould pay ten ſhillings annually, or more, if that ſhould not be found ſufficient to prevent the uſe of it? It can hardly be ſuppoſed that the duty upon tea would ſuffer much upon this account, as the ſmuggler almoſt wholly ingroſſes this ſet of cuſtomers. If theſe licences were not confined to the common people, but made general, the good ariſing to the public, by reſtraining them from ſo hurtful and expenſive a diet, would be ſo great and acceptable, that few, I apprehend, would complain.

It cannot be doubted but that very blameable remiſſneſs, and want of attention to the indiſpenſible cares and duties they owe to their diſtreſſed families, have been encouraged and introduced among the common people, and conſequently the public expence greatly increaſed, by the deluſions

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of certain vain and fanatical teachers, who are greatly multiplied of late years; and who have perplexed many well-meaning chriſtians with their explanations of doctrines concerning predeſtination, faith, and ſatisfaction for ſin, in a manner not only inconſiſtent with the whole tenor of the holy Scriptures, but likewiſe with the juſtice and goodneſs of almighty God; and indeed ſo as to make all religion, and all attempts towards any advancements in piety and virtue, ſo far as regards our future condition, unneceſſary and uſeleſs. By which means, on one hand, many pious people have been driven to great, and even fatal deſpondency, by not perceiving within themſelves thoſe internal feelings of the divine favour and acceptance, which had been deſcribed to them, as the neceſſary tokens of a ſaving faith. Whereas in truth, the faith of pious, virtuous, and ſincere chriſtians, cannot poſſibly be dangerouſly erroneous, or diſpleaſing to almighty God; and on the other hand, too much foundation has undoubtedly been given for ignorant and enthuſiaſtical perſons, to make themſelves eaſy, under the moſt unjuſtifiable irregularities of practice, by laying unwarrantable ſtreſs and dependence upon certain modes of believing. For notwithſtanding a ſincere, unprejudiced, and careful inquiry after all ſuch things as we are bound either to believe or practiſe, is very commend-

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able, and indeed a duty incumbent upon all men, according to their different abilities and opportunities, yet the bare aſſent of the mind to any religious truths whatever, as it does not depend on the will, but neceſſarily and irreſiſtibly follows the force of ſuch evidence as ſhall appear, and, which it is to be feared, is generally given by theſe deluded people upon truſt, without any ſufficient evidence, or previous inquiry at all, cannot poſſibly be a matter of merit in itſelf; and is ſo far from being any atonement, or excuſe for vicious indulgences, or the neglect of any moral duties, that on the contrary it is the greateſt poſſible aggravation. As the Sacred Writings, in order to guard againſt ſuch vain imaginations, and dangerous follies of men, do not fail to preſs it upon their minds, in the moſt emphatical manner, to have no expectation of obtaining the favour of God by any other means whatever, except by the conſtant and uniform practice of righteouſneſs, holineſs, and purity of life; and that he will not accept of any thing in their ſtead; and that all faith without them; all attendances upon any religious inſtitutions; all ceremonies, rites and obſervances whatever, to the neglect of theſe great and indiſpenſible duties, which are of unalterable and eternal obligation, as having their foundation in the very nature and reaſon of things, and are the rule by which even God himſelf vouchſafes to regulate

regulate his dealings towards all his creatures, are not only vain and uſeleſs, but an abomination in his ſight. Which things, indeed, are ſo evident in themſelves, ſo agreeable to right reaſon, and our genuine uncorrupted notions of the wiſdom, the the juſtice, and holineſs of the ſupreme governor of the world, that, if men through inexcuſable vanity and careleſſneſs did not give up their underſtandings to be miſguided and over-ruled by the moſt unreaſonable prejudices, or by the dominion of ſome favourite luſts, they could not poſſibly ſuffer themſelves to be betrayed into ſuch groſs and dangerous corruptions.

I could wiſh, for the honour of my country, I might allow myſelf to throw a veil over thoſe ſcenes of idleneſs, diſorder, and licentiouſneſs of every kind, which are encouraged and promoted at elections for members of parliament; but theſe practices have too conſiderable a ſhare in corrupting the morals of the people, and the reputation, ſafety, and happineſs of the preſent, and future ages, are too nearly concerned to excuſe my being ſilent. For, notwithſtanding that honourable houſe, with a zeal and ſpirit becoming true patriots, have at all times diſcouraged every kind of undue influence at the elections of their members, and have guarded all approaches to that aſylum of Britiſh liberty, with every barrier that human caution

caution could ſuggeſt; and although it may be very true, that even thoſe gentlemen, whoſe elections ſeem to be altogether ſecure, and who may be ſaid to be almoſt out of the very reach of oppoſition, as they are choſen by voters, who in general hold immediately under them, and depend in great meaſure upon them, may notwithſtanding, by the prevalence of cuſtom, find themſelves obliged to be at ſome conſiderable expence in providing ſuitable entertainment for them, about the time of election, and perhaps at other times occaſionally; and although it is to be wiſhed that theſe things were otherwiſe, yet in all this if matters are kept within due and moderate bounds, there may be no very great harm; as a conſiderable part of that money might probably be expended, in ſome ſhape or other, among the ſame ſort of people, during the courſe of a parliament, by neighbouring gentlemen of fortune, benevolence, and hoſpitality, if the election was out of the queſtion. And although many gentlemen of character and great worth, contrary to their original deſign, and the approbation perhaps of their own minds, may ſometimes be inſenſibly led into the moſt expenſive and unjuſtifiable meaſures, when they meet with what they call unreaſonable and unnatural oppoſition; and which moſt men are apt to palliate with the pretence that it is done in their own defence; and that it is always fair

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and allowable to fight men at their own weapons. And although the gentlemen who begin the oppoſition generally pretend their principal motive is to keep others out, who would oppoſe their friends, and that cauſe, which all men claim as the cauſe of liberty and their country; and that if one ſide was to ſit ſtill and quietly look on, it would become in ſome degree a ſort of betraying their truſt, and leaving their enemies at full liberty to proſecute their hurtful ſchemes; and that the zeal of agents and friends often carries them beyond the inſtructions or intentions of their principals; and which, I do not in the leaſt doubt, may often be the caſe; yet, whenever theſe things are carried to undue lengths, and the people drawn from their lawful occupations, not only from day to day, and week to week, but ſometimes perhaps for many months together, to be partakers of the moſt diſorderly and riotous exceſſes, and are often ſeduced, it is to be feared, by more corrupt and dangerous temptations; no motives whatever can excuſe what is ſo apparently wrong in itſelf; and which does not only of neceſſity introduce a ſpirit of idleneſs, intemperance, and proſtitution, together with perpetual animoſities and ill blood among the neareſt neighbours and beſt friends, but in the long run, if ſome remedy ſhall not be found, muſt ſap the very foundations of our moſt excellent conſtitution.

tion. I do not like this doing evil that good may come of it; it is a moſt deſtructive principle; and carries men, if they follow it as far as it will lead them, to the moſt dangerous and pernicious conſequences.

Non tali auxilio, nec defenſoribus iſtis
Tempus eget.——

Theſe are matters well worthy the moſt ſerious attention of all lovers of their country. For when we reflect that this noble fabric of liberty and laws, ſo wiſely planned and happily erected by our forefathers, after ſo many glorious ſtruggles, and defended at the expence of ſo much blood and treaſure, and which has been delivered down into our hands whole and intire as a moſt ſacred depoſitum; that this work of ages, the admiration and envy of all mankind; this laſt retreat left upon earth for freedom and public happineſs; that this only poſſeſſion, truly worthy the purſuit and contention of wiſe and virtuous men, is in ſuch imminent danger of being torn down and trampled upon, and this reſpectable and enlightened nation reduced to it's ancient ſtate of darkneſs, ſuperſtition, and tyranny; and all this, not by the ſuperior power and bravery of any foreign enemy, but by the baſeneſs and treaſon of her own unnatural and degenerate ſons; I own the melancholy proſpect depreſſes my ſpirits, and fills my heart

heart with ſadneſs and ſolicitude for the fate of thoſe that are to come after me. Proſtitution, venality, and a general corruption of manners, as unavoidably tend to deprive every people of their liberty and independency, as any natural cauſes produce their effects; and although our caſe at preſent may not perhaps be altogether deſperate; yet if ſome remedy ſhall not be timely applied, our ruin cannot poſſibly be removed to any very great diſtance. But for the preſent we will ſhift the diſagreeable ſcene, and flatter ourſelves with the hopes, that that auguſt aſſembly, the ancient and natural guardian of liberty, will not ceaſe endeavouring to put ſome ſtop to ſo dangerous and ſpreading a contagion; and that men of known independency, reputation, and abilities, a ſufficient number of which, if we are not wanting to ourſelves and our country, are always to be found, may be ſought out and invited to ſave us; who will pay a more juſt regard to their own dignity and importance, and make uſe of more honeſt and laudable methods of recommending themſelves to our approbation and confidence, than by encouraging, and introducing ſuch ſhameleſs ſcenes of riot, intemperance, and general confuſion; and tempting men of all degrees to proſtitute their conſcience, their honour, and their country to the moſt ſordid and infamous conſiderations. And it were to be wiſhed the evil would always ſtop here;

the moſt ſolemn and awful appeal the laws have been able to contrive as the teſt of truth among men, may always be demanded; in which caſe many perſons muſt either excuſe themſelves, and thereby publickly acknowledge their baſeneſs and proſtitution, or go thorough ſtitch with the buſineſs, and plunge at once into all the horrors of perjury; in which it is to be feared theſe corrupt practices too frequently terminate. Perhaps if the civil magiſtrate on theſe occaſions was always impowered, and obliged upon information, to interpoſe his authority, and endeavour, to the utmoſt of his abilities, to enforce induſtry, ſobriety, and order, by immediately taking away, or at leaſt ſuſpending, the licences of all public houſes whatever, whether inns, or common alehouſes, except for the neceſſary accommodation of travellers, which ſhould ſuffer ſuch diſorders and exceſſes, and by inflicting ſuch puniſhments upon the offenders as the laws will juſtify, it might be a probable means of preſerving not only the health, well-being, and morals of the people, but at the ſame time alſo the fortunes of the candidates from being ſubjected to ſuch ruinous expences, by thoſe extravagant lengths to which things are ſometimes carried. And if you can once prevail upon the people to be ſober and induſtrious, their ſituation and circumſtances will of courſe be ſo much altered for the better, that they will not, by any means, lay ſo

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open and expoſed to other kinds of corruption. Beſides, as on many occaſions of vacancies during the continuance of a parliament; but more eſpecially at every general election, great numbers of manufacturers, artificers and other labouring men, to the great detriment of the public, as well as themſelves, are often taken from their families and occupations, and conveyed from the metropolis, and other places, to give their votes in the moſt diſtant counties, cities, and boroughs, by the different candidates, whenever there is any conſiderable contention. Now when theſe expences come to be added to the long liſt of all the others that muſt neceſſarily be incurred upon the immediate ſeat of war, they ſwell ſometimes to ſo immenſe a bulk, that few men who have not taſted of the munificence of Aſiatic princes, are able to ſupport them, without making ſuch breaches in their fortunes as they may never afterwards, perhaps, be able to repair. And as the preſence, or abſence, of all ſuch voters would moſt probably leave the parties concerned, in point of equality of votes, pretty nearly in the ſame ſituation they were before; if all ſuch conveyances, at the expence of candidates, were included in the bribery laws, it might become a moſt intereſting reformation both for the candidates themſelves, the voters, and the public.

Whenever we ſhall in earneſt ſet about the great work of reformation, the taſk perhaps may not be found altogether ſo difficult or impracticable as has been generally imagined. If the obſtacles that lie in the way have been owing either to ſome eſſential defects in the laws, or to the want of proper care and attention in watching over the behaviour of the common people, the caſe cannot be deſperate. But then we muſt not any longer continue in that impolitic and unnatural practice of beginning the work where all wiſe legiſlators have left off; but let the public care be employed for the future, rather in finding out means for preventing their wants and diſorders, than in ſo prepoſterous a manner confining our whole attention to the relieving the one, and puniſhing the other after they have happened. And until this ſhall be done with ſome tolerable degree of ſucceſs, the puniſhments of the magiſtrate will never ſufficiently reſtrain men from diſorder and violence; the wants and diſtreſſes of the poor will go on increaſing together with the public expence.

That diſorder and violence muſt happen, in ſome degree, in this country as well as the reſt of the world; that there will remain a ſufficient number of neceſſitous and diſtreſſed objects to exerciſe our benevolence and humanity, is always to be expected, notwithſtanding we do every thing

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in our power to prevent it. But that much may be done if we are not wanting to ourſelves and the public, and things put upon a far better footing than they are at preſent, I think can admit of no doubt.

The care and attention of mankind in general, are ſo totally taken up and employed about their own concerns and intereſts, and ſo little in reality upon the public welfare, where it is not immediately and ſenſibly connected with their own, that I apprehend, as things now ſtand, no great matters are to be expected from that quarter, notwithſtanding mens general pretenſions and profeſſions, if experience did not prove the contrary, would incline us to hope for better things.

It will eaſily be granted, I preſume, that the true characters of the common people, their virtues and vices, their induſtry and idleneſs, cannot well be thoroughly known, except by the perſons among whom they immediately reſide: and I muſt beg leave to add, except the ſame people, who are almoſt the only judges and witneſſes of, and moſt materially intereſted in their behaviour, are in ſome greater degree than is provided for by any laws at preſent, made reſponſible for the conduct of the common people, who reſide within each

particular pariſh, we ſhall never be able to proceed with any reaſonable expectation of ſucceſs.

That all the inhabitants in every pariſh, who have no other viſible and uſual way of maintaining themſelves and families except their frugality and induſtry, whenever they are obſerved to ſpend their time in idleneſs, and run into diſorders and expences that cannot be ſupported by honeſt and lawful methods, ſhould be accountable ſomewhere for their proceedings, I think is moſt reaſonable. The juſtice of peace is undoubtedly the proper magiſtrate to hear and judge in ſuch caſes. The inhabitants of their own and neighbouring pariſhes are generally the only perſons that can well be ſuppoſed capable of giving true information; if this magiſtrate has not already, by the laws in being, ſufficient powers to enquire and regulate in ſuch manner as ſhall appear reaſonable and proper to preſerve the good order and ſafety of the public, it is high time that, ſo far as is conſiſtent with the genius and freedom of the laws of this country, he ſhould be enabled to reſtrain men from idleneſs, intemperance, and diſorder, and by ſome means or other oblige them to be induſtrious, ſober, and peaceable, and to endeavour to the beſt of their abilities to ſupport themſelves and families; or that they ſhould be liable to ſome degree of cenſure and puniſhment if they ſhould

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prove refractory; it certainly would be the moſt friendly and benevolent reſtraint, it would in other words be obliging them to be independent and happy. And ſome effectual regulations and reſtraints of this ſort are become the more abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary, as we have found, to our great misfortune and coſt, by the experience of ages, what little influence and effect the ſufferings and examples of others have upon the minds and practice of inconſiderate men, when idleneſs and vice, through a total want of public care, have been once permitted to become habitual and inveterate.

But this whole plan will want ſpirit and activity, if the inhabitants of every pariſh ſhall not be made accountable to the public, for the behaviour of the common people that reſide among them. But this can never be carried into general practice, ſo as to bring about any tolerable degree of reformation, except their neglect of ſo great and important a duty be attended with certain and immediate loſs to themſelves. This will operate with greater force upon the minds of mankind in general, than any fancied notions of patriotiſm and public ſpirit, or than any apprehenſions of expence and danger, that are removed to a great diſtance, and perhaps at laſt thought to be in ſome degree uncertain.

As things now ſtand, any inhabitant may go on from day to day, and year to year, to be as idle as he pleaſes; may ſpend his time and money in riot and diſorder in public houſes, to the great detriment and diſtreſs both of himſelf and his family; may totally abſent himſelf from all places of public worſhip during the whole courſe of his life; or be notoriouſly guilty of the moſt profane and daring impieties: nay, although he is publicly known to be a common poacher, or ſmuggler, by which illegal practices, and dangerous connections, young unexperienced thoughtleſs men are fatally, and almoſt inſenſibly, led into every kind and degree of criminal practice; or although he ſhould give the ſtrongeſt reaſons to ſuſpect him of more dangerous breaches of the laws; yet if he does not apply to the pariſh for relief, he may generally go on, to the terror of every one, without any enquiry being made into his behaviour by the inhabitants, or any reſtraint from the civil magiſtrate; notwithſtanding all around him, who ſee or hear of his proceedings, expect every day when theſe things will terminate in his own ruin, and bring his diſtreſſed family a ſtanding charge upon the pariſh. Surely if any method can be thought on, conſiſtent with our conſtitution and the ſpirit of our laws, to draw unhappy thoughtleſs men from ſuch miſerable and dangerous circumſtances, and lead them by degrees to habits of ſobriety and

honeſt induſtry, no difficulties ſhould diſcourage us from uſing our utmoſt endeavours to compleat ſo ſalutary a work. The public ſafety demands it at our hands; the diſtreſſes and miſeries, and too frequently the final ruin of theſe unfortunate people, call loudly upon us to reſcue them from ſo dangerous a ſituation. But this can never be expected until every pariſh ſhall keep a better look out, and endeavour more effectually to diſcourage every tendency in the common people towards the firſt cauſes of theſe diſorders. It will always be their intereſt, as well as duty, to ſee this neceſſary work carried into effectual execution; but it is much to be feared, that no ſufficient remedy will ever be found that may give any conſiderable check to ſo confirmed and inveterate an evil, unleſs the legiſlature ſhall awaken, and excite the minds of men to promote their own, as well as the public ſafety, by making their neglect of this moſt eſſential duty attended with certain and immediate loſs to themſelves. I would, therefore, beg leave to propoſe it to the conſideration of parliament, whenever any common perſon, who has no other viſible way of providing for himſelf and family except his frugality and induſtry, ſhall be convicted of any capital felony, or of poaching, hedge-breaking, robbing of rivers or ponds of fiſh, ſtealing of fowls, deer-ſtealing, ſmuggling, or any other criminal breach of the laws; or of notorious

torious idleneſs, drunkenneſs, or profane curſing and ſwearing, or of being an habitual abſentee from all places of public worſhip; whether the pariſh where ſuch perſon uſually reſides, ſhould not be ſubject to a penalty in proportion to the heinouſneſs of the offence. Perhaps if the fine for robbery or burglary, or any other capital offence, was ſet at twenty pounds, it would not be too high; nor do I apprehend that, in any criminal caſe whatever, it ſhould be put lower than five pounds. Theſe unhappy delinquents never fail to give ſufficient notice long beforehand of what we may moſt reaſonably expect either from their idleneſs, extravagance, or ſome other ſuſpicious circumſtances. It is therefore the moſt reaſonable thing in the world, that the very people through whoſe negligence alone theſe dangers and diſorders have been brought upon the public, ſhould be made ſenſible of it in ſuch manner as may probably oblige them to be more careful for the future, more eſpecially as it is impoſſible, in the nature and order of things, that the behaviour of the common people ſhould be watched over and regulated with the leaſt proſpect of ſucceſs, by any perſons whatever, except by thoſe among whom they generally and immediately reſide.

Something of this ſort is already eſtabliſhed by law in the caſe of robberies between ſun and

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ſun, by levying upon the county where the fact was committed, the ſum that was loſt, although it ſhould be ever ſo conſiderable; which ſeems to bear much harder upon counties and hundreds, than the law here propoſed, as the robber very probably might not reſide among them; and if he had, the diſtrict charged with the repayment of the money, is generally too extenſive to be capable, by the preſent laws, of having any ſufficient care or inſpection taken into the behaviour of all the inhabitants.

Many pariſhes alſo, have offered and paid rewards for the apprehending and convicting offenders, full as high as the penalties here propoſed. Much higher are ſettled by act of parliament, and higher ſtill are frequently advertiſed by ſecretaries of ſtate, and other public and private authority for the ſame purpoſes, which are often, without doubt, of great ſervice to the community. It makes no difference to pariſhes, whether they pay the money in rewards or penalties, but the good influence the method here propoſed muſt probably have over the minds of the people more than the other, and its natural tendency to promote induſtry, ſobriety, and orderly behaviour, I flatter myſelf, can hardly be diſputed. Rewards for the apprehending and convicting offenders, muſt undoubtedly make their ſituation much more dan-

dangerous, and often be the means of bringing them to ſpeedy puniſhment, and it is highly proper they ſhould be continued; but the great and beneficent work of preventing thoſe miſchiefs and diſorders from falling upon the public, and unhappy thoughtleſs men from being brought into ſuch miſerable and dangerous circumſtances, is totally left undone.

That no neglect may happen in regard to a due examination being made into the conduct and ſtate of the common people, every pariſh ſhould be obliged to that duty half yearly at leaſt; and in large and populous pariſhes, perhaps, quarterly, or oftner if found neceſſary, and to report to the juſtices at the quarter or petty ſeſſions, or otherwiſe to any juſtice in the neighbourhood, who ſhould be impowered to proceed againſt idleneſs, drunkenneſs, or any other diſorderly behaviour. And that every pariſh, in caſe of neglect, ſhould be ſubject to ſuch penalty as to the legiſlature ſhall ſeem proper.

It is abſolutely neceſſary that this duty ſhould be well attended, to prevent its falling into a few or low hands, which would in a great meaſure defeat the influence and weight of their meeting together. If ſuch Inhabitants as ſhall be appointed to this ſervice, were ſubjected to a ſmall pe-

nalty for non-attendance, to be divided among thoſe that ſhall be preſent; or, perhaps, if ſome allowance was made by the pariſh for attending this very material duty, they might find their account in it.

At each of theſe meetings, whether half yearly, quarterly, or oftener, the names of all the common people, whether houſe-keepers or inmates, together with the names of all ſuch perſons who ſhall keep public-houſes, or entertain poor lodgers, ſhould be called over; at which times the pariſh-officers, together with the beadle, in ſuch pariſhes where they employ one, ſhould always be preſent, that they may be ready to give ſuch information as may have come to their knowledge concerning the behaviour of any perſon whoſe name has been called over. And it ſhould particularly be enjoined the beadle and other officers, to employ themſelves diligently in getting the beſt inſight they are able into the true ſtate of the common people; and when any complaint is intended to be made either by the pariſh-officers or others, the perſons againſt whom the complaint is deſigned, ſhould have previous notice, and be obliged to attend, that they may be ready to hear and anſwer for themſelves.

Upon

Upon theſe occaſions great diſcretion is neceſſary in thoſe inhabitants who ſhall be appointed to this duty, among whom the miniſter of the pariſh ought always to be one. All kind of harſhneſs and bitterneſs of reproof ſhould by all means be avoided, even the moſt obſtinate and refractory ſhould be left without any juſt cauſe of complaint on that ccount; and whenever they oblige us to have recourſe to the civil magiſtrate for further aſſiſtance to carry the laws into execution, it ſhould appear to be done with the greateſt reluctance and regret, in order that every one may ſee, and be convinced, that nothing but their own real happineſs and trueſt intereſts, which are neceſſarily and unalterably connected with the public utility and ſafety, had any ſhare in our proceedings; and, whenever it ſhould appear that our kind and paternal admonitions were attended with a ſuitable influence upon their behaviour, it might be very proper if pariſhes were enabled to apply, out of the poors-rate, ſuch ſmall rewards as might encourage men to continue in well-doing, and alſo remain a reputable token of the public approbation.

And that an inquiry into the ſtate and behaviour of the common people, may be made eaſier to the inhabitants, whoever has already, or ſhall at any time hereafter, lett a dwelling-houſe

to any perſon who has no other viſible means of ſupporting himſelf and family except his frugality and labour, he ſhould be obliged immediately to give in his name and employment, together with an account of what family he has, to the church-warden or overſeer of the poor; and in like manner all perſons who entertain inmates of the ſame rank, ſhould be laid under the ſame obligation; and notice likewiſe ſhould always be given, whenever ſuch inhabitants ſhall quit ſuch houſes or lodgings. And if any perſon whatever, who hires either a houſe or lodging, ſhall dare to do it under a falſe name, the penalty ought to be very ſevere; by which means delinquents and ſuſpected perſons, and all others, muſt either expoſe themſelves to the riſk of ſuch penalties, or make it much eaſier for the public to find them out, whenever they ſhall ſee occaſion; as their names and employment, together with an account of what family they have, muſt ſtand in the book of ſome pariſh or other. And, in order to induce all perſons to be more cautious, and make due inquiry beforehand, it is highly reaſonable that the owners of ſuch houſes, and all perſons who ſhall let out poor lodgings, ſhould be made, in ſome meaſure, accountable to the pariſh for the behaviour of ſuch people as they ſhall think proper to introduce.

And

And whenever it ſhall happen that an inhabitant of any pariſh ſhall be convicted of any breach of the law, and it ſhall appear to the magiſtrate before whom ſuch offender ſhall be tried, that no regular inquiry had been made into the ſtate and behaviour of the common people within ſix kalendar months, or otherwiſe, as directed by law; in all ſuch caſes, the pariſh which ſhall have neglected ſo neceſſary a duty, ſhould always be obliged to pay a double penalty.

The largeneſs of any pariſh does not at all increaſe the difficulty of inquiring into the ſtate and behaviour of the common people. Such pariſh may be divided into any number of diſtricts that ſhall be thought neceſſary or convenient, only let the care of inſpection fall to the ſhare of the principal inhabitants which ſhall reſide within each diſtrict.

And as all perſons whatever, who have no viſible means of ſupporting themſelves and families except their labour, ſhould be obliged to give a ſatisfactory account of that matter whenever they are called upon by proper authority; if due care was taken, even thoſe large and populous outpariſhes in London and Weſtminſter, where the moſt looſe, diſorderly and abandoned perſons take up their ordinary or caſual reſidence, might ſoon

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be cleared, and put into good order, without the leaſt difficulty; and thoſe unfortunate people, to their own unſpeakable happineſs, as well as the public ſafety, be reduced to the neceſſity of ſupporting themſelves by ſome honeſt labour.

Whatever penalties pariſhes ſhall incur by any inhabitants being convicted of burglary, felony, or any other breaches of the laws, ſuch penalties ſhould always be divided between the informer, proſecutor, and pariſh where the informer ſhall reſide, although he ſhould belong to the ſame pariſh with the offender, in ſuch proportions as to the legiſlature ſhall ſeem proper: And whenever the pariſh where the offender reſides, ſhall be the proſecutor, or the means of convicting ſuch offender, ſuch pariſh ſhould always in that caſe be excuſed from any penalty whatever.

It may be proper to obſerve, in this place, that the caſe of ſoldiers in quarters, and of thoſe in barracks and encampments, perhaps, cannot well be included in the foregoing plan, as it would be unreaſonable that pariſhes ſhould be anſwerable for offences which they do not ſeem to have had ſufficient power to prevent: The officers of each regiment appear to be the principal perſons whoſe immediate duty it is to watch over the behaviour of the common ſoldiers. They are armed

already with ſufficient authority, and may always be ſeconded by the power of the civil magiſtrate. And, as many diſorders happen from that quarter, ſome further proviſion ſhould be made for enforcing ſo neceſſary a reformation.

And as the diſorderly and profane behaviour of the common ſoldiers, has undoubtedly a conſiderable ſhare in corrupting the morals of the people in all places where they are quartered, ſome effectual care ſhould be taken by their officers to prevent ſuch diſorders, both by their own examples, and by ſuch puniſhments of the offenders as ſhall appear moſt likely to put a ſtop to offences of ſuch dangerous tendency: And if the ſame care was taken on board all his majeſty's ſhips, as well as others, it could not fail of having a very happy influence upon the public morals.

But, in order more effectually to prevent ſuch irregularities and breaches of the laws as are hinted at above, as all the neighbouring pariſhes may be endangered, if any one pariſh ſhall not carry the laws into execution, by taking care that good order, ſobriety, and induſtry be preſerved among the common people; whenever it ſhall happen that any one or more of the inhabitants of any pariſh, who have no viſible way of maintaining

themſelves and families except by their frugality and labour, ſhall be notoriouſly idle, intemperate, or diſorderly; or ſhall be generally looked upon from habitual idleneſs, extravagance, or any other ſuſpicious circumſtances, to be pilferers, hedge-breakers, poachers, or ſmugglers, or in any other way diſturbers of the public peace; if notice ſhall not be given in ſome reaſonable time by the pariſh where they uſually reſide, to the proper magiſtrate, in order that they may be dealt with according to law; any inhabitant of their own, or any neighbouring pariſh, ſhould, in conſequence of ſuch neglect, be encouraged to give information; and if it ſhall appear to the magiſtrate before whom it is laid, to be well founded, he ſhall be impowered to take ſuch meaſures to reſtrain and puniſh the offenders, as the law ſhall direct; and, at the ſame time, to lay ſuch fine upon the pariſh where the offender reſided, and which had neglected its duty, to the great offence and danger of the public, as to the legiſlature ſhall ſeem proper.

Some effectual care ſhould be taken to ſuppreſs all houſes, whether public or private, of low proſtitution and debauchery, or that ſhall entertain diſorderly and ſuſpected perſons, which have been too long ſuffered, to the utter ruin of many unhappy people both in their circumſtances and

health. I would not be underſtood to inſinuate, that houſes for the reception of perſons above the rank of the common people ſhould be ſuffered, where thoſe ſcenes of lewdneſs, diſorder and riot, are carried on in the moſt open and indecent manner, to the great offence of all men who have any regard to public order and decorum: but the nature of my ſubject leads me to take particular notice of ſuch things more eſpecially as are immediately calculated to draw the common people into idleneſs, expence and ruin. Yet perſons of better condition ſhould remember they are anſwerable for all the conſequences of that influence their example muſt naturally have over the minds and behaviour of the lower people. In all caſes of this ſort, if the pariſh where theſe houſes are ſituated, ſhall not take care in due time to ſuppreſs them, encouragement ſhould be given to any inhabitants of their own, or any neighbouring pariſhes, to give information to the proper magiſtrate, who, upon conviction, ſhould be enabled to lay ſuch fine upon the pariſh which ſhall have neglected its duty, as the law ſhall direct. And the pariſh, in thoſe caſes, ſhould always have a remedy againſt the owner or occupier of the houſe. The ſame encouragement ſhould be given to informations againſt common proſtitutes which infeſt the ſtreets, and the ſame remedy againſt the

owner

owner or occupier of the houſe wherever they ſhall happen to reſide.

Proviſion ſhould be made by law, not only that no licences ſhould be granted without the reſolution of a pariſh-meeting firſt had, as is propoſed in the former part of this inquiry: but whenever it ſhall appear that a greater number of houſes are already licenced than are neceſſary for the public convenience, of which every particular pariſh ſhould always be ſuppoſed a competent judge, or that any one ſhould ſuffer gaming, tipling, or any other diſorderly behaviour, ſuch houſe ſhould be immediately ſuppreſſed by a reſolution of a pariſh-meeting for that purpoſe: And whenever ſuch diſorderly houſe ſhall not be ſuppreſſed in due time, or immediately after notice given of ſuch offence, but ſuffered to go on to the great inconvenience of the neighbouring pariſhes, ſuch pariſh ſhould be ſubjected to a penalty, upon information and conviction, as is propoſed above in like caſes.

And as nothing can have a more direct tendency to encourage idleneſs and diſorder among the common people, and conſequently increaſe the poor-rate, than unneceſſary alehouſes, it might perhaps be very proper, if all ſuch inhabitants as ſhall hold under ten, twelve, or fifteen pounds a

year in land; or eight, ten, or twelve pounds in houſes, according to the value of houſe-rent in different parts of the country, and who, of courſe, muſt be very little intereſted in the expence of ſupporting the Poor, were diſqualified from voting at all ſuch pariſh-meetings as ſhall be held either for procuring licences for public-houſes, or for the ſuppreſſing ſuch as are already licenced.

And as there are many inſtances of private houſes ſelling ale, beer, and other liquors without a licence, to the great detriment and corruption of the common people, and loſs of the revenue; in all ſuch caſes, if information ſhall not be given in due time by the pariſh where the offence ſhall happen; the ſame encouragement ſhould be given to any inhabitant of their own, or any neighbouring pariſh, as is propoſed above; in all which caſes, the pariſh ſhould have ſome remedy againſt the owner or occupier of the houſe.

Perhaps if, in every hundred, or larger diſtrict, an officer was appointed, and paid out of the county-rate, whoſe particular duty it ſhould be to take effectual care that this law be carried into ſtrict and immediate execution in every pariſh within his diſtrict, it might be a very proper and uſeful regulation.

It does not appear to me, that any reaſonable objection can be made againſt ſubjecting pariſhes to ſuch penalties as they ſhall bring upon themſelves by ſuch ſhameful neglect of their duty, by which means they expoſe not only themſelves, but the public likewiſe, to ſo great danger and terror. I am perſuaded it is the only effectual remedy that can ever, in any tolerable degree, put ſome ſtop to ſo many dangerous and increaſing evils. Nor is it to be apprehended that theſe penalties can ever fall very ſeverely upon any pariſhes: it will always moſt probably be in their own power either totally to prevent them, or at leaſt keep them within the moſt moderate bounds; if they were leſs, they would not ſufficiently excite their care and attention. But if, contrary to expectation, it ſhould ever happen, from any extraordinary circumſtances, that theſe penalties ſhould, in any pariſhes, without any neglect on their ſide, exceed the bounds of reaſon and moderation; in all ſuch caſes the judge before whom the offenders ſhall be tried, might be empowered to lighten the burthen, by obliging the neighbouring pariſhes, or the whole hundred, to bear their proportionable ſhare; though I flatter myſelf there can hardly any pariſh be ſo circumſtanced, that will not, upon the whole, ſave much more in the lowering its poor-rate, than will be paid in fines.

The really induſtrious Poor hardly ever either want, or will accept any relief from the pariſh; and whenever any occaſion draws them from their uſual labour, they are conſtantly obſerved to expreſs their unwillingneſs and diſſatisfaction: They quit it with full as much regret and uneaſineſs, as the idle and profligate are dragged to it. How greatly does it concern every pariſh to endeavour at increaſing the firſt, and leſſening the number of the laſt.

But after all that has been ſaid, it is undoubtedly true, that nothing can add ſo great weight to all ſuch laws, as ſhall be thought neceſſary to reſtrain and regulate the manners and practice of the common people, as a more general example of moral and religious behaviour among their ſuperiors. Every friend to virtue and religion muſt rejoice, and conceive the moſt ſanguine hopes from the illuſtrious pattern ſet by the Sovereign of every public and domeſtic excellence. Happy would it be for mankind, were it eaſy, even for a prince of ſuch exalted and amiable accompliſhments, clearly to diſcern the true characters and qualifications of men through the obſcure medium uſually ſhed around thrones, by the arts and colourings of ambition and intereſt; and would our unhappy diviſions and endleſs contentions allow him to follow the genuine ſuggeſtions of his royal mind, and

leave him at full liberty to avail himſelf of his penetration and fortitude, in the purſuit of his own trueſt glory and happineſs, as well as the public good, by inflexibly determining, that no titles, no connections, no knowledge, no ſplendor of parts, no abilities whatever, unadorned with real patriotiſm and intrinſic worth, ſhould ever find countenance or admiſſion to the royal favour, we might then, indeed, be allowed to flatter ourſelves with the hopes that religion and public ſpirit might raiſe their drooping heads, and even become faſhionable, and flouriſh in an air that has not uſually been ſuppoſed the moſt favourable. Nor could ſuch ſhining lights exhibited to public view from ſuch advantageous eminences, fail to attract the attention, and engage the imitation of all orders and degrees of men.

Theſe good purpoſes would alſo be greatly promoted, if more care was taken in general in the education of the ſons of our nobility, and gentlemen of large fortune; for notwithſtanding many of them, to their honour and praiſe, take all due care to have them furniſhed with every kind of knowledge and accompliſhments that are neceſſary for thoſe high and important ſtations, which it is probable they will one day fill; yet this is far from being always the caſe. It muſt be owned, for the credit of our great public

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ſchools, that ſo long as ſuch young gentlemen are continued there, affairs go on generally perhaps as well as can be expected, under that univerſal remiſſneſs, and diſregard of authority which at preſent prevail among all orders and degrees of men: little or no diſtinction is made between them and the ſons of perſons of inferior rank and fortune; the buſineſs of the ſchool muſt be done, and the diſcipline ſubmitted to equally by all. But after they are once emancipated from thence, the real and true buſineſs of education is too often pretty well over. If they are ſent to either of our own univerſities, their friends and the gentlemen to whoſe care the education of youth in thoſe places is committed, ſeem to be ſometimes too well agreed that ſuch ſtrict application, regularity of behaviour, and compliance with the ſtatutes, as are expected to be ſubmitted to, and thought abſolutely neceſſary for young gentlemen of inferior rank and fortune, may in great meaſure be diſpenſed with; and that a thorough knowledge and proficiency in human learning, the ſciences, the hiſtory and laws, both ancient and modern, of their own and foreign countries, is neceſſary only for men of the learned profeſſions. If they are ſent abroad to any foreign univerſity for two or three years, and after that to make the grand tour and ſee the world, without having previouſly laid in proper and ſufficient ſtores for ſo long and dangerous an expedition, I

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am afraid the caſe is not much mended. It would ſometimes, I apprehend, be more for their own as well as their country's credit, if they would be content to ſee the world in ſecret, without giving the world at the ſame time an opportunity of ſeeing them. This affair is become an immenſe and ruinous expence to the nation. The returns are too often made in refinements upon all the follies and vices of Europe, to be added to our own national ſtock. Perhaps I am grown an old-faſhioned man; but be that as it may, I ſhall never prevail on myſelf to believe that more application, more learning, and more knowledge are neceſſary for a clergyman, who moſt probably may never want them for any other purpoſes except the inſtruction of a ſmall country pariſh, and his own private amuſement, than for gentlemen who, by and by, may ſit in the great aſſembly of the nation; or for ſome perhaps who ſoon may find themſelves in the arduous and important ſituation of being hereditary counſellors of their Sovereign, and of becoming at the ſame time both legiſlators and judges.

Our theatrical repreſentations have for more than an age paſt, been a reproach upon the national taſte; and have had undoubtedly no inconſiderable ſhare in corrupting the morals of the people. What can a ſenſible foreigner think of us, when

when he ſhall ſee women of the firſt quality and faſhion patiently ſitting four hours together, and ſeemingly amuſed with repreſentations where ſuch ribaldry and licentiouſneſs are introduced; with the ſtrongeſt intimations of buſineſs to be done behind the ſcenes, as a woman of modeſty, among the loweſt and moſt uneducated of the vulgar, ought to bluſh to hear. By theſe means we ſee the ſtage, which might be uſefully employed in the ſervice of morality and decency, and in having a conſiderable ſhare in forming a public taſte becoming a brave virtuous and enlightened nation, proſtituted to the infamous purpoſes of debaſing and corrupting the minds of young perſons of all degrees. It is high time to get rid of a vicious and unnatural practice introduced in the reign of an eaſy monarch, devoted to pleaſure, and ſeconded by a licentious court; to pay ſo much reſpect to a polite, and perhaps as virtuous an audience as any in Europe, and to ſuppoſe more reaſonable and acceptable methods might conſtantly be found for their amuſement, than by the introduction of ſuch ſcenes as are only fit for brothels. I have heard that the managers of our theatres, more particularly of one of them, have endeavoured to reform the ſtage, by introducing ſuch repreſentations as a ſenſible audience need not bluſh to attend. It is their duty to perſevere, although they ſhould not be able

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immediately to break through the public taſte. Decency, propriety, and truth are natural to the human mind, and if purſued with conſtancy, and proper reſpect, will always at laſt prevail. And I may be allowed to be the more ſanguine on this occaſion, as native dignity, and unaffected modeſty, by the unanimous conſent of all the nations of Europe, are the characteriſticks of the women of this country. And ſo difficult is it to efface, or even obſcure, the durable impreſſions of a virtuous education, that if any perſon whatever, ſhould dare in private converſation to introduce any kind of licentiouſneſs of this ſort, in the preſence of far the greateſt part perhaps of thoſe very women who had ſubmitted to the public taſte upon the ſtage, without the leaſt appearance of being offended, he might reaſonably expect it would be the laſt time he would ever be admitted to that honour.

The greateſt care ſhould be taken that ſobriety and good order be preſerved in all jails, and places of confinement for labour and correction, and that the keepers of ſuch places be men of ſober, religious, and decent behaviour; and that ſermons and prayers be had twice every Sunday, and prayers at leaſt twice every week on the working days; and that ſome grave and devout clergyman be appointed for that ſervice, and ſufficiently

ficiently paid out of the county rate. And if the clergy of London and other cities and county towns, would take their turns in ſupplying this truly pious and uſeful duty, it would be greatly for their credit. There is too much reaſon to apprehend, that under the preſent general neglect, the idle and refractory, who are committed to theſe places of confinement for their correction and amendment; and ſuch unhappy perſons as ſtand charged with various crimes and miſdemeanours, there to remain in ſafe cuſtody, until the time of their trial ſhall come, when perhaps the greateſt part of them ſhall be acquitted and diſcharged; from the examples they meet with there of every kind of immorality and profaneneſs, are generally turned out greater proficients, and more hardened in iniquity than they were before they went in. Nor are unhappy debtors I fear, to the reproach and ſcandal of this nation, in a much better ſituation. The reformation of theſe diſorders ſhould be made the duty of the gentlemen in the commiſſion of the peace, at their general and quarter ſeſſions in every county.

Such corporal puniſhments as are generally made uſe of in houſes of correction, are by no means calculated to bring about any conſiderable reformation, more eſpecially in young perſons, where the diſeaſe is not become inveterate, and

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where there may be ſome poſſible hopes of amendment. In ſuch there generally remains ſome ſenſe of duty, and regard to character; when that is once irrecoverably loſt, by their being brought to public ſhame, they ſoon afterwards become hardened and obſtinate ſinners, and conſider a whipping bout as an eaſy and tranſient penalty, which they may happen to pay once or twice in their life-times, for the conſtant privilege of offending: and frequently when they get among their fellow ſufferers, and companions in iniquity, are ſaid to make it a matter of ſport and merriment. Labour is their averſion, and the only puniſhment they dread. One, two, or three months of cloſe confinement, ſhort allowance and hard labour is no laughing matter; they would frequently, during that time, find themſelves at full leiſure to reflect coolly and ſoberly upon their errors; and I am much miſtaken if two or three of theſe experiments, or perhaps ſometimes leſs, would not generally bring the moſt obſtinate and hardened among them to ſome ſenſe of their duty; and to conclude, if this is to be the caſe, they might as well work for themſelves at large, as for the public, with hard fare, and under cloſe confinement.

With the greateſt reſpect and deference to that honourable aſſembly, I beg leave to obſerve, that the

the inſpection into the public manners ſhould be the care of parliament; and that not caſually as it may happen to be moved for by any public ſpirited member; a ſtanding committee ſhould be appointed for that great and important ſervice; and might be called the committee for public morals; which committee ſhould meet regularly once a week during every ſeſſion, and have laid before them as exact an account as can be procured of the ſtate and behaviour of the people in every county, city, and corporate town; which accounts ſhould be ſent up by the clerks of the peace, recorders or town clerks, or other proper officers; who might of courſe be ſupplied with them half-yearly, quarterly, or oftener, according as the legiſlature ſhall appoint theſe inquiries to be made in every particular pariſh; by which means the committee would ſee at one view the public ſtate of morals over the whole kingdom, and thereby be always enabled to regulate and actuate the whole extenſive plan: nor are theſe things in their own nature at all difficult; nothing is required but firmneſs and conſtancy. And if this great work ſhould not be ſeriouſly and in earneſt entered upon, and vigorouſly and effectually purſued, under the reign of ſo excellent a prince, all good men will mourn, and deſpair of ever ſeeing ſo happy a change. But, what gives no ſmall encouragement to hope is, that this moſt important and truly

truly royal duty will be greatly facilitated, as his majeſty will be thereby enabled to carry into the moſt extenſive practice, the natural diſpoſitions and longings of his benevolent and parental mind; and which will moſt certainly render his Majeſty the trueſt bleſſing, and ornament of his people, and in the higheſt ſenſe entitle him to that moſt venerable and amiable appellation, of being the father of his country; and tranſmit his name with more durable honour, and more endear his memory to all future ages, than if all the military glories of all the heroes of the preſent, and paſt times, were to be united and center in his Majeſty alone: Nor could the happy effects which muſt neceſſarily follow from ſuch regulations, fail to excite an emulation among all civilized nations; and ſo his Majeſty in time moſt probably become, by his example, the happy inſtrument, under providence, of deſtroying the dominion of vice and licentiouſneſs, and of eſtabliſhing in it's room the kingdom of more general order and righteouſneſs over the whole world.

If the ſcandalous practice of common begging ſhould once be effectually diſcouraged; it is abſolutely neceſſary that employment ſhould be found for perſons of every age that are able and willing to work; and the idle and refractory ſhould be ſent to the houſe of correction, there to

be detained, and conſtantly kept to hard labour, until they ſhall be brought to a due ſenſe of their errors. If materials were provided by pariſhes for the ſpinning of linnen and woollen thread and yarn, for the making cloth of an inferior ſort for the uſe of the common people, and alſo for knitting of ſtockings, and for ſpinning of coarſe yarn for the making of mops, coverlets for beds, ordinary blankets, and ſuch other fabrics; or for ſpinning coarſe thread or twine for ſacks and other goods of that ſort, which are generally wanted; and if they were afterwards employed in making them up into proper ſizes for the uſe of farmers and others, and alſo in the dreſſing of flax and hemp, and in places near ſea-port towns, in picking of oakam; ſome ſuitable occupation might always be found for perſons of every age. Thoſe that are able and in health to be allowed in proportion to what they ſhall earn, always ſubjected to ſuch penalties as the legiſlature ſhall think proper, for waſting or embezzling the materials, or for damaging or ſpoiling their work. Even the aged and infirm might generally be kept either wholly, or in great meaſure, from falling upon the pariſh, by allowing ſuch of them as are moſt impaired by age or infirmity, but ſtill capable of doing ſomething towards their own ſupport, a little more than they earn, in order to encourage and promote induſtry as much and as far as poſ-

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ſible; and indeed it is an act of the greateſt kindneſs to the laſt mentioned perſons, to provide for them ſome employment ſuitable to their ſtrength and age, by which means they may be enabled in great meaſure to procure for themſelves a comfortable ſubſiſtence, which is a ſituation infinitely preferable to any ſupport whatever, that is altogether precarious. Nor are there many infirm perſons, except ſuch as labour under the preſſure of ſome ſevere and violent diſorder; nor many perſons ſo utterly diſabled by age, that might not be accommodated with ſome employment or other, ſuited to their weakneſs and infirmities; than which nothing would contribute more to their chearfulneſs and health, and to the removing that langour of the mind, and that inſupportable tireſomeneſs and diſguſt which conſtantly and neceſſarily accompany abſolute idleneſs in perſons of every condition. It might alſo be very proper, and would have a natural tendency to encourage and promote induſtry, if ſome ſmall gratifications were allowed, eſpecially to young perſons, wherever any extraordinay care and diligence ſhould appear: and all this might be done with infinitely more ſuitableneſs and propriety, and I am thoroughly perſuaded with very great ſavings to the nation, by ſuffering them to continue in their own dwellings, than by any public inſtitutions whatever: ſuch materials as are neceſſary for their employment

might always be delivered to them by the church-warden or overſeer, or by a committee of the principal inhabitants, or whom they ſhould appoint, and which perſon ſo appointed might be able to take upon him the care of many neighbouring pariſhes at the ſame time, in like manner as by all other manufacturers; taking an account of the weight out and in, and at the ſame time making a proper allowance for waſte: here they would each of them always remain along with their own families, and live in their accuſtomed method, both in reſpect of diet and lodging. Here would be wanted no new expenſive buildings, no expenſive management; there will be room left for no ſcandalous jobs among bricklayers, carpenters, brewers, bakers, butchers, and various other tradeſmen. The only things neceſſary here will be a ſufficient proviſion of materials and implements. The perſons employed by the pariſh will be upon the ſame footing as ſpinners, weavers, and other artificers, employed by any other maſters, and by perſons equally intereſted to take care that they execute their work with diligence, carefulneſs, and honeſty; and who will have the ſame remedy in every caſe of breach of duty. And the people thus employed, as they will be always paid, at leaſt in proportion to what they ſhall earn, and the aged and infirm generally ſomething more for their encouragement, will evidently

evidently upon the whole, have as great, if not greater motives to diligence, care, and fidelity, than workmen in general employed by any other perſons whatever. And by the introduction of ſuch coarſe fabrics as are mentioned above, eſpecially of linnens, the nation as well as private perſons would be greatly benefited; as the importation of foreign goods of that ſort, which at preſent is very conſiderable, might be rendered in great meaſure unneceſſary.

The inhabitants of ſuch pariſhes as are ſituated within any moderate diſtance of manufacturing towns, which are greatly increaſed, and have ſpread themſelves almoſt over the whole country, can ſeldom want employment. And in great manufacturing towns whenever trade happens to be dull, and many artificers conſequently turned off; if the maſters, until ſuch time as buſineſs ſhall revive, would provide a ſurplus ſtock of ſuch goods as they know will be wanted in half a year, or a year's time, this inconvenience might perhaps in ſome meaſure be remedied; more eſpecially if the journeymen would ſubmit to a ſmall diminution of wages, in order to enable the maſter workman to keep ſuch dead ſtock upon his hands ſo conſiderable a time without being too great a loſer; and every induſtrious perſon would certainly judge this preferable to the being deſtitute of all employ-

ment, whereby both himſelf and his family muſt be expoſed to the greateſt diſtreſs, or become a dead weight upon the public.

If ſome ſort of employment was once provided for all perſons that were able, in any degree, to work; and if the idle and refractory were always ſure to meet with ſuch puniſhment as they moſt certainly deſerve, that troubleſome and expenſive buſineſs of ſettlements, would probably ſoon become an affair of no very great conſequence; as few poor families, if proper care was taken, would ever in all likelihood become very chargeable to the pariſh. But if it ſhould ſeem expedient to continue the preſent laws in general regarding ſettlements; this alteration at leaſt, I apprehend, ought to be made, that whenever any pariſhes have a mind to ſend any perſon to the place of their legal ſettlement, ſuch removal ſhould always be at the ſole expence of ſuch pariſh, although it ſhould be at ever ſo great a diſtance.

If farmers in general, who are out of the reach of manufacturing towns, would make a reſerve of ſuch things as may be poſtponed for a year or two without any great inconvenience, ſuch as laying of quickſet hedges, ſcouring of ditches, and the like, labouring men would ſeldom want employment in the winter, from the ſhortneſs of crops;

crops, and the threſhing being conſequently ſooner over upon that account; in the ſummer, more eſpecially in the times of hay and corn harveſt, they have generally ſufficient employment for all ſuch as are willing to work; and indeed are often at a loſs to know where to get hands. The high roads ſince the general introduction of turnpikes, and other occaſional public and private works, employ great numbers. And indeed when pariſhes ſhall find themſelves not only obliged to maintain their poor, whenever they are out of employment, but alſo ſubjected to a penalty for ſuffering them to remain in that ſituation; it becomes in a great meaſure unneceſſary to endeavour to ſhow them by what method they may beſt remove that inconvenience; their own intereſt, and the particular ſituation and circumſtances of pariſhes will better inform them, than any general inſtructions whatever; uſe and experience will certainly point out various methods unthought of at preſent. Beſides, induſtry in one man of courſe begets and ſupports induſtry in others. The labour of a very ſmall proportion of hands is employed in the clothing and feeding a million of wretches who are almoſt naked and ſtarved; where the rags of the dead are worn over again by the living; and where the ſtale unwholſome refuſe of fiſh-ſtalls and ſhambles is their higheſt luxury.

It is abſolutely neceſſary that the price of labour ſhould be kept within the moſt moderate bounds in every country which carries on any conſiderable commerce in it's manufactures with foreign nations. Whenever therefore the neceſſities of government oblige the parliament to raiſe money, and lay taxes for our defence and ſupport; the utmoſt care ſhould be taken that all ſuch things as the common people want for their daily ſuſtenance, be as much as poſſible exempt from ſuch additional burthens, as they muſt of courſe in time prove fatal to every country, whoſe riches, power, and ſtrength, depend on it's foreign trade; as it muſt enable all rival nations, wherever the expence of living, and conſequently the price of labour is cheaper, to underſell them at foreign markets. The additional duty upon malt greatly affects the common people; and the ſeverity of it falls principally upon the moſt induſtrious and deſerving; who ſeldom or never frequent alehouſes, and to whom conſequently the price of all liquors, either brewed or diſtilled from malt, and ſold at thoſe places, is altogether immaterial; as indeed whatever ſmall beer, or little ale they ſtand in need of, either for their common uſe, or occaſional refreſhment, is in general brewed at their own homes; except by thoſe who happen to reſide in cities, or great towns, where they may, if they think fit, ſupply themſelves from the com-

mon brewer. Nor indeed is the advanced price of ale and ſtrong beer at public-houſes of that conſequence to the common people in general as ſome men ſeem to imagine. They are undoubtedly led into the principal part of their expences, at theſe houſes, through idleneſs, intemperance, and vicious habits, and ſeldom through any real neceſſity; in which caſes the advanced price is ſo far from being any real inconvenience, or evil to them, that, on the contrary, their health and well-being, together with the happineſs both of themſelves and their diſtreſſed families, are thereby more likely to be promoted, than if, by the cheapneſs of thoſe liquors, the means of proceeding to exceſs, and of abuſing themſelves, was left more within their power and circumſtances. Nor do I apprehend, that in the long catalogue of taxes that affect the neceſſaries of life, any one can be pitched upon which the ſober, induſtrious and really valuable part of the common people have leſs reaſon to complain of, than the duty upon ale and ſtrong beer; nor does the complaint, I am well aſſured, come from that quarter. And as the preſent ſituation of our affairs is ſuch that we cannot afford to part with both duties, they had certainly much better remain as they are, than that the beer ſhould be diſcharged, and the malt remain burthened. And indeed the duty upon ale and ſtrong beer, inſtead of being the

firſt of all thoſe taxes which ſeem in any degree to affect the Poor, ought in all reaſon to be the very laſt that ſhall be taken off, as it is undoubtedly a tax upon the moſt dangerous and pernicious luxury, the luxury of the common people.

There are in the metropolis, and in many other parts of the kingdom, ſocieties or clubs of young labouring men, who appropriate a trifling part of their weekly earnings towards raiſing a fund for the ſupport of their members under any infirmities or diſabilities ariſing from ſickneſs, accidents, or age; which, if properly regulated, are excellent and uſeful inſtitutions, and undoubtedly prevent many poor families from becoming chargeable to the pariſh; many of them having very laudable rules and orders for their government and behaviour. And, as it is always the intereſt of every ſingle perſon to diſcountenance idleneſs and extravagance as much as poſſible, and to encourage and promote induſtry, ſobriety and frugality in every member of the ſociety, it might be very proper if all reaſonable encouragement was given to make them more general; and it would certainly contribute greatly to that end, if gentlemen, and perſons in circumſtances who live in the neighbourhood, would ſometimes countenance them by becoming honorary members.

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As to the moſt proper method of relieving ſuch neceſſitous perſons as muſt at all times want our aſſiſtance, notwithſtanding we do every thing in our power to prevent it, I am perſuaded it will be, upon the whole, both leſs expenſive to the public, and more ſuitable to the circumſtances of the Poor themſelves, if they are ſuffered to remain in their own dwellings, and there relieved or ſupported according to their ſeveral neceſſities, than if either ſingle pariſhes ſhould collect them into work-houſes ſo called, or a conſiderable number be joined together for that purpoſe. A few inſtances, perhaps, might be produced where this collective method may have been attended with ſucceſs, from the accidental care and experience of the perſons who have had the care and management, or from ſome other circumſtances peculiar to the place where the experiment has been made. But, if I am not much miſtaken, ſhould we form our judgment from the whole, we ſhall find that theſe eſtabliſhments have been ſo far from anſwering the expectations of the public, that, in general, the evil has been rather increaſed than diminiſhed, both in reſpect of the numbers of neceſſitous objects which have preſented themſelves, and alſo the proportionable expence of maintaining them.

When a workhouſe is firſt eſtabliſhed in any pariſh, the inhabitants always promiſe themſelves great ſavings and reformation; materials are immediately purchaſed for the employment of all the Poor that are able to work, and every thing puts on the face of buſineſs; but, by degrees, the public care and attention ſlacken; mens private affairs and engagements appear to them ſufficient excuſes; the houſe is filled and nothing done; the inhabitants, when they find the taxes increaſe, wonder and complain; determine that ſtrict inquiry ſhall be made; reſolve their affairs ſhall be better managed for the future; then try again with the ſame ſucceſs as before.

If we find, by the experience of many years, that theſe houſes are ſeldom properly managed in ſingle pariſhes, where the attendance is, as it were, at the next door; what is to be expected when many pariſhes ſhall be formed into one large diſtrict, and the greateſt part of the perſons under whoſe care and management the Poor are intended to fall, muſt neceſſarily live at the diſtance of many miles? It requires no great penetration to foretel what the conſequence muſt be. The error lies in expecting from man, what men in general have never done, and therefore it is moſt reaſonable to preſume they never will.

If the legiſlature ſhould at any time reſume the conſideration of this affair, I beg leave to obſerve, it would greatly aſſiſt them in forming a true judgment, if the ſtate of all the work-houſes in England ſhould be ordered to be laid before them, with an account of the number of years each of them has been eſtabliſhed; alſo how many perſons have been annually admitted into each, with an account of the weekly expence of maintenance, the clear yearly profits ariſing from labour, the number of infants that have been received, with an exact account of what proportion hath died, together with the ſtate of the poor-rate ſome conſiderable number of years before and after each eſtabliſhment.

From the time the poor are admitted, and have changed their own coarſe and ſlender diet for the comparative luxury of theſe houſes, the whole expence of their maintenance is thrown upon the pariſh; and their entertainment there is generally ſuch, that I apprehend the greateſt part of the poor, eſpecially the idle and improvident, which I am afraid ſometimes make a conſiderable majority, are ſo well ſatisfied with their ſituation, which is uſually much better than they can ever probably procure for themſelves, that they are ready to find any pretext for continuing there as long as they poſſibly can; not only to the great

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and unneceſſary oppreſſion of the induſtrious inhabitants; but at the ſame time alſo the public are deprived of an infinite number of hands that might be uſefully employed in agriculture, arts and manufactures.

I would by no means be underſtood to inſinuate that all proper care ſhould not be taken of the poor, whenever they are not in a capacity of providing for themſelves: it is the higheſt degree of public cruelty and ingratitude, to ſuffer men who have ſpent their youth and ſtrength in labour and uſefulneſs, to languiſh under the want of the common neceſſaries and conveniencies of life, when age or infirmities have rendered them incapable of ſupporting themſelves: but nevertheleſs, I think it is worthy the public attention, whether the making a more comfortable retreat for the idle, improvident, and undeſerving, than the moſt ſober, frugal, and induſtrious can generally expect to provide for themſelves, does not naturally tend to weaken the motives to private care, and of courſe tempt the common people to ſhift the burthen from themſelves upon the public. Too much regard and tenderneſs can hardly be ſhown to the deſerving and laborious poor; but ſurely when they come to be put upon an eſtabliſhed ſupport, ſome kind of diſtinction ſhould be made,

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notwithſtanding this rule can never take place in ſudden and preſſing emergencies.

There ſeem to me to be only two inſtances in which theſe public receptacles for the poor have ſo much as the appearance of utility; I mean in the caſe of deſerted children, and ancient perſons who are utterly paſt their labour, and who have no relations that are able and whoſe duty it is to take care of them, and afford them ſome aſſiſtance. As to ancient perſons, there ſeems to be ſome degree of cruelty in tearing them not only from their friends and acquaintance, but generally from the place of their birth and reſidence for the whole perhaps, or uſually the greateſt part of their paſt lives; to which all men have particular attachments, and quit with regret and reluctance, and obliging them to mix with a ſet of people they know not, and to whom they are utterly unknown; which generally muſt be the caſe in the plan of dividing the whole country into large diſtricts. As for deſerted children, or the children of ſuch poor as are not able to ſupport them, the many inſtances we find of almoſt incredible numbers that have been ſuffered to periſh for want of proper care under the management of work-houſes, is become a national barbarity and reproach, that well deſerves the attention of the legiſlature. In both the above-mentioned caſes,

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proviſion might always undoubtedly be made in ſome poor honeſt family, in a far more ſuitable, and proper manner, and at much leſs expence to the public; and might at the ſame time alſo be of conſiderable advantage to ſuch poor perſons as ſhould think proper to receive them, and often be the means of keeping them from becoming chargeable to the pariſh.

I apprehend in all other inſtances, where the poor can poſſibly want the public aſſiſtance, every circumſtance both of convenience to themſelves, and ſaving to the public, the caſe of lunatics only excepted, pleads in the ſtrongeſt manner for continuing them in their own dwellings; there they will always remain, under every circumſtance of infirmity ariſing from ſickneſs or age, under the eye and care of their deareſt friends and neareſt relations; as theſe mutual intercourſes of duty muſt generally lie between huſbands and wives, brothers and ſiſters, parents and children, who will be always bound by every tie of duty, intereſt, and natural affection, to miniſter to their wants, alleviate their ſufferings, and haſten their recovery: how little of this tenderneſs prevails in work-houſes, the event in general I fear too plainly ſhows; nor indeed can better things be reaſonably expected, when we conſider into what hands the care of the infirm and helpleſs of every age

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in public work-houſes generally falls; whoever among the women-poor appear to be beſt able are generally pitched upon, I apprehend, for that ſervice; a ſervice impoſed upon them perhaps againſt their inclination, and without much hopes of reward: how it has accordingly been executed, I remember not many years ago appeared before an auguſt aſſembly, who had ordered an enquiry to be made, if I do not miſtake, in ſome of the large pariſhes in Weſtminſter, into the care and fate of ſuch infants as had been under the management of theſe houſes within a limited time; and found, to the aſtoniſhment of all preſent, that not above one or two in forty or fifty, if my memory does not fail me, had eſcaped out of thoſe mercileſs hands.

I am perſuaded when the expence of providing convenient houſes with their furniture, for the reception of the poor, as was intended by the late bill, together with all the various expences of management, is added to the charge of maintenance, it will be found they might have been relieved, or ſupported at their own homes, in a manner much more proper, and ſuitable to their uſual way of living, with very great ſavings to the public. If we ſhould eſtimate the expence of every ſix perſons in theſe houſes, at twenty four

ſhillings a week, I believe no one converſant in theſe affairs will think the calculation much too high, when every thing is taken into the account, as many of them muſt be clothed as well as fed. If we take the families, upon an average of the whole labouring people of England, conſiſting of the ſame number of perſons, I believe we ſhall find they make leſs, perhaps, than a third part of that money do the buſineſs without complaining; and as I apprehend, that bread, and butchers meat, make the principal part of their ſuſtenance, in thoſe houſes, in all parts of the kingdom, the difference of expence can ſeldom be very conſiderable.

There ſeems to me to have been this manifeſt error and inconſiſtency, in the bill of the ſeſſion before laſt, that the author ſeems to flatter himſelf, from the great utility of his ſcheme, that induſtry will be promoted, the number of neceſſitous objects greatly reduced, and conſequently the public eaſed of great part of the expence in a few years; and at the ſame time the whole nation is put to immenſe charges, in providing, and furniſhing large and expenſive buildings, undoubtedly without any certainty, I believe without much probability of ſucceſs; and which upon his own plan, if it ſhould ſucceed, muſt ſhortly become in great meaſure empty and uſeleſs: beſides, it is putting the poor upon ſuch a peculiar,

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permanent, and almoſt unalterable eſtabliſhment, notwithſtanding any inconveniencies or defects which might afterwards appear, as can hardly ever be juſtified. The methods and regulations propoſed in this treatiſe, have certainly this advantage over moſt other ſchemes which have been laid before the public, that the attempt will not be attended with much expence; ſo that whatever the ſucceſs may be, the riſk cannot be great.

If in ſome large and populous pariſhes in the out-parts of London and Weſtminſter, or in other great towns, any difficulties may poſſibly ariſe in reſpect of taking care of the poor in their own dwellings, either in regard of ſupporting them under their neceſſities and infirmities, or the employment of ſuch as are able to work; as in ſuch pariſhes in general, eſpecially in London and Weſtminſter, work-houſes are already eſtabliſhed; ſuch houſes, wherever the pariſhioners ſhall think proper, might be continued. And they may at the ſame time have an opportunity of trying what may be done by the other method, and of forming ſome judgment from their own obſervation and experience, which way induſtry is moſt likely to be promoted, the real neceſſitous poor moſt properly relieved, and the public expence leſſened.

Beſides, there is one circumſtance very diſagreeable in our preſent method of proceeding, and which can hardly be inculcated too often; that notwithſtanding the public are ſo ſeverely oppreſſed with this heavy burthen, and which indeed in many places is become almoſt inſupportable, and which without ſome effectual alteration muſt neceſſarily go on increaſing; yet the wants and diſtreſſes of the poor are by no means leſſened on that account; on the contrary they always have, and ever muſt at leaſt keep pace with, if not out-run, the public proviſion made for their relief, be it ever ſo large and extenſive; which indeed, whenever it exceeds its true bounds and proportion, or is improperly applied, is not only thrown away and waſted to no purpoſe, but has the moſt hurtful and dangerous influence upon the minds and practice of the common people, by taking off their only proper reliance upon their own frugality and induſtry, and by that means tempting and encouraging them to idleneſs and extravagance, with all their pernicious conſequences; and afterwards, as is moſt natural, to a dependence on the public for aſſiſtance, or ſupport.

Whoever has been at the trouble of attending our public hoſpitals for ſome years paſt, cannot but obſerve that the number of diſtreſſed objects,

which every week preſent themſelves, and are rejected for want of room, is by no means leſſened, notwithſtanding the great increaſe of places for their reception and relief; a little more than forty years ago, I apprehend, there were only two public hoſpitals, and one houſe for lunatics, within the bills of mortality; ſince that time they are ſo immenſely increaſed, that it is no eaſy matter to reckon them up; we meet with them in every quarter of the town; ſome of which perhaps were originally ſet on foot, and contributions ſollicited, from mean and intereſted views of particulars; but all of them undoubtedly carried into execution, and ſupported always by the well-meant zeal of charitable and benevolent perſons; and whom I would by no means be underſtood to make anſwerable for that hurtful influence they did not foreſee ſuch foundations muſt neceſſarily have upon the minds and behaviour of the common people, whenever they are carried to too great an exceſs. As to the additional proviſion for lunatics, it is worthy the benevolence and humanity of the nation; nor can it be carried too far, ſo long as there ſhall remain one ſingle object unprovided for.

There is ſomething very peculiar in the public proviſion made for theſe unhappy people, which is, that it's good influence and uſefulneſs might

be made to extend not only to people in low condition, who may happen to have this diſorder fall upon any near relation; but even perſons alſo in middling, and even eaſy circumſtances, might receive the greateſt advantages.

Whenever any one, whoſe income may happen to be from forty or fifty, to two, or even three hundred pounds a year, ſhall have this moſt dreadful of all calamities viſit any one of his family, whom he is obliged to take care of; no man can well be a proper judge of the melancholy ſituation, without firſt having had experience of it himſelf, or being witneſs to the calamity and terror it occaſions to others. If the unhappy object is taken care of at home, the attendance and expence, even in that caſe, muſt be very conſiderable; and what is ſtill worſe, the danger and diſtreſs preſent themſelves continually before our eyes: if the inconvenience is removed to a diſtance, and proviſion made in any reputable houſe appropriated for the reception of ſuch unfortunate people, the charges run ſo high, that if they continue long, they become abſolutely ruinous and inſupportable; with the common people in low circumſtances the caſe is widely different, as the care and expence fall wholly upon the pariſh.

I am perſuaded if a plan was rightly formed, and a number of gentlemen of character and public ſpirit would give encouragement to it, and undertake the care and management, an eaſy remedy might be provided againſt this calamity, which falls with ſuch peculiar aggravation upon perſons who happen to be in ſuch a ſituation in the world, that they are not able to ſupport the great expence attending private care, nor can with propriety accept of any charitable proviſion. To this end I would beg leave to propoſe that perſons ſhould be admitted, and provided with ſuitable appartments, attendance, phyſic, and all other neceſſaries at the different penſions following, *viz*, fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, ten, or perhaps rather fifteen pounds a year; which ever of the two laſt ſhould appear ſufficient, might be the ſum ſettled for pariſh lunatics in general; and alſo ſo many more perſons might be taken in gratis, as the ſavings from the penſions and private donations would ſupport. By theſe means people in middling, and even eaſy circumſtances, might place theſe unhappy objects under ſafe and reputable care and management, with ſuitable accommodations, in proportion to the different penſions, for leſs perhaps than one third of the expence that muſt accrue in private houſes of credit; and at the ſame time proviſion made for greatly increaſing the number of thoſe they ſhall

think proper to admit gratis. If the gentlemen of St. Luke's hoſpital ſhould approve of this hint, form it into a regular plan, and endeavour to carry it into execution, they would deſerve greatly of the public; nor could it fail of ſucceſs in ſuch reſpectable hands.

If a more general ſpirit of orderly and virtuous behaviour could once be introduced; it is highly probable the number of theſe unhappy objects, which have been obſerved greatly to increaſe of late years, might be proportionably leſſened. It cannot be doubted but that the conſciouſneſs of a life ſpent in diſſipation, profligacy, and all kinds of criminal exceſſes, whenever ſuch unhappy perſons ſhall find themſelves under the neceſſity, and ſome time or other they certainly muſt, of taking a full view of, and dwelling upon, the long and black account, may ſo diſarrange or oppreſs the reaſoning powers, that the mind can have no refuge but in the dreadful alternative of madneſs or ſuicide.

I flatter myſelf by this time it ſufficiently appears that the meaſures hitherto generally taken, both by the public and by private perſons, to ſupply and redreſs the wants and ſufferings of the common people, to leſſen the public expence, and introduce a more general ſpirit of induſtry, ſobriety,

briety, and order, have by no means produced thoſe good effects for which they were ſo charitably and piouſly intended; but on the contrary, that they always have and ever muſt encourage and promote the very evils they were deſigned to prevent.

But as the beſt laws are apt to be neglected, unleſs care is taken, from time to time, to preſerve them in mens minds; if the legiſlature ſhould approve of the methods and regulations recommended in this Inquiry, and enact them into a law, I apprehend proviſion ſhould be made that all pariſhes be obliged to furniſh themſelves with ſuch law, or an abſtract of ſuch parts of it as regard their behaviour, and take care that it be publickly read at a pariſh meeting, at leaſt twice in every year; the moſt proper times for which, I apprehend, would be thoſe days that ſhall be appointed for enquiring into the ſtate and behaviour of the common people previous to their entering upon that buſineſs.

Thus have I ventured to lay my thoughts before the public, upon a ſubject of the greateſt importance that can ever come under their conſideration; and ſhall moſt readily leave the whole with them to diſpoſe of in ſuch manner as they ſhall think proper. It is a ſubject in which all mankind

kind are equally intereſted; whoever therefore ſhall not fall in with my ſentiments, it can hardly be ſuppoſed to ariſe from any other motives except their not admitting the force of my arguments. And notwithſtanding I judged it a reſpect due to the public, not to trouble them with my thoughts upon this intereſting ſubject, until they had undergone a long, ſevere, and careful examination; and although I am thoroughly perſuaded it is the only plan upon the whole, that can ever put any conſiderable ſtop to the progreſs of thoſe various inconveniencies and evils which we have ſo long to our great misfortune laboured under; and that, as it is, it would fully anſwer whatever I have allowed myſelf to expect from it; yet am I by no means either ſo ſanguine, or ſo vain, as to imagine many things may not have eſcaped me, which, upon trial, may appear neceſſary to carry into full execution the great purpoſes I have aimed at. Whoever, therefore, ſhall point out any errors or defects in this enquiry, I ſhall be ſo far from conſidering him in the light of an adverſary, that on the contrary, I ſhall look upon him as a moſt valuable ally, engaged along with me in the ſame purſuit. If mankind are made better and happier, it is of little conſequence from what hand the ſervice comes.

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All reaſonable men, I am well aſſured, will agree with me in this, that whoever ſhall reſcue the common people of this nation from their preſent unhappy condition of idleneſs, extravagance, and vice, into which ſuch numbers of thoughtleſs men have been unhappily betrayed, by any methods, conſiſtent with that ſpirit of freedom obſervable in all our laws, which, to the glory of this happy nation, hold the liberty of the loweſt ſubject in the ſame eſtimation with the higheſt, to habits of honeſt labour, ſobriety and frugality, is their beſt and trueſt friend. The condition of the induſtrious, ſober and virtuous labourer, if we make a true eſtimation of things, perhaps ought rather to excite our envy than pity. Health and peace of mind, the choiceſt bleſſings reſerved by providence for mankind, are to be looked for in his humble cottage. His cares ſeldom exceed the limits of the day; the induſtry, frugality, and virtue of the parents being all the fortune his children will ſtand in need of. He ſits down to his homely frugal meal with chearfulneſs and appetite, the natural reward of virtuous labour, in vain ſought after by pamper'd luxury in the moſt exquiſite delicacies. His time, that inſupportable burthen to the idle and voluptuous, never hangs heavy upon his hands; the love and practice of labour becoming at once his ſupport and beſt enjoyment. The

night finds him prepared for ſweet and uninterrupted repoſe. Religion teaches him to be thankful and content.

On the other hand the idle and improvident Poor, although they ſhould not proceed to criminal breaches of the law, are in a ſituation ſufficiently wretched, as they muſt generally be in want, not only of the comforts and conveniencies, but ſometimes alſo of the very neceſſaries of life: but the greateſt exceſs of miſery that human nature can be capable of, is when unhappy, thoughtleſs men endeavour to remove or forget for a ſhort ſeaſon thoſe evils that oppreſs them, by intemperance and criminal practices; of which any one may be eaſily convinced, if he can bear to take a view of their wretched condition in any of the great out-pariſhes of London and Weſtminſter, where in every lane and alley he may meet with whole families crowded into one miſerable room, periſhing in the midſt of hunger and nakedneſs, of filth, vermin, and diſeaſes. Their diſorders and outrages men ſee and deteſt, and are ever ready to puniſh; their ſufferings are concealed from the publick obſervation. The means of relief are generally criminal and dangerous; and ſuch are their unhappy connections, that to retreat or go on are often equally hazardous. Add to all this, that every pain and every diſtreſs

diſtreſs they feel are embittered with the conſciouſneſs of their having brought the whole upon themſelves by their own inexcuſable folly and perverſeneſs. But what above all aggravates their unhappy condition is, that under all this variety of wretchedneſs, ſo long as they continue in their vicious practices, they are utterly cut off from all hopes of the favour and protection of Almighty God both now and hereafter, that ſovereign cordial of affliction to virtuous men.

The rich and powerful of this world, when they have not ſufficient continence and fortitude to withſtand the temptations which ſolicit them on every ſide, but forget the hand that raiſed them, and moſt unreaſonably and ungratefully pervert thoſe bleſſings and advantages deſigned by providence to be employed in the protection of the weak and innocent, and in the promoting the general proſperity and ſafety of all around them, as well as their own good fame and happineſs, into the means and inſtruments of tyranny and oppreſſion, of gratifying, without reſtraint, every unreaſonable and vicious inclination, and of bringing upon themſelves every kind of diſhonour and wretchedneſs, from which dangers the honeſt labourer, by the lowneſs of his ſituation, finds himſelf happily ſheltered: their impaired health, their ruined fame, their harraſſed and diſ-

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gusted sensations and appetites, and the reproaches of their own minds, convince them when it is too late, that they have altogether mistaken the road to true pleasure; and by the miserable straits to which we see them reduced to get rid of their time and reflection, they become melancholy, but instructive examples to mankind of the insufficiency of riches and power; and how far the possessors of them may fall short of the virtuous labourer in true happiness.

I am persuaded, if the methods and regulations recommended in the foregoing pages shall be carried into execution with any tolerable degree of care and attention, the happy effects will soon be sensibly felt among all degrees of men: industry, sobriety, and frugality will be promoted, and all kinds of intemperance and disorder, with every degree of violence upon the property and persons of the people, will be more effectually restrained, than by the most severe punishments. The smuggler, whose illegal proceedings are always notoriously known in the place of his usual residence, will find no protection or retreat; and that infamous practice, so detrimental and discouraging to the fair trader, will receive a more fatal wound, than if our coasts were surrounded and watched by a thousand armed cutters, and the whole army employed upon that service alone; to the

the great advancement of the revenue and national credit, at a time when every saving is of the utmost consequence. The game also, if that shall be thought worthy to be considered as an object of publick care, will be more effectually preserved, than by all the rigorous prosecutions of the association. The poacher will be in the same situation with the smuggler; he will be able to find no place of retreat; every parish, for it's own safety, will be obliged to deliver him up into the hands of justice.

In every possible circumstance, wherein the behaviour of the common people can be considered, both their own well-being and happiness, together with the publick convenience and safety, will be so mixt and interwoven in the very body and constitution of the laws, that they can hardly fail of having their due influence and effect, both upon the minds and practice of the whole nation.

If the foregoing observations shall appear to have their foundation in reason and truth, and suited to the nature and circumstances of mankind, I do not doubt but they will meet with due regard from those gentlemen, whose station puts it in their power, and whose duty it is to provide

provide equally for the good order, ſafety, and happineſs of the whole people.

But more eſpecially I beg permiſſion, with all duty and reſpect, to lay the caſe of the Poor, diſtreſſed, and inconſiderate part of his people at the feet of that moſt excellent and amiable Prince, who rules over theſe nations, whoſe royal and parental virtues are the brighteſt ornaments of his crown, and whoſe illuſtrious example muſt add efficacy and dignity to every law that is calculated to promote the reformation and happineſs of mankind.

FINIS.